





Annie Jane Tithall.

From The Author.



ANGELO LYONS.

A NOVEL.

BY

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GLENHOLME,' 'ALICE HYTHE,' &c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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ANGELO LYONS

CHAPTER I.

HOME TIES AND KINDRED LINKS.

It was winter in earnest at Shiphampton—one of those bitter-cold, piercing, pitiless December afternoons, close on evening, when feeling hearts in comfortable parlours, with blazing fires and warm carpets and curtains, and draught-defying doors, and lacking nothing wherewithal to set black frosts and freezing winds at defiance, have a painful conception ‘how dreadful poverty must be!’

While old Sol’s red face was to be dimly seen through murky clouds, seemingly still mindful of the old town as well as other places, and the business and hum and bustle of the day were going on, and its work had to be got through, and the nipped blood was kept in tolerable motion by it, the ‘fall of the

mercury below zero' was borne bravely. But when came the cutting night-winds from the water, sweeping up its long, straight High Street in furious gusts that froze the breath in beards and whiskers, lucky those in old Shiphampton who, snugly housed at home, could poke their fires, and look over their blinds into the street, and bless their stars that they were so blessed by Providence! Somewhat differently circumstanced to that poor shivering mother on the curb-stone, with her twin-babes in her arms, 'moving on,' to order; or that miserable, half-clad black man, with the bundle of ballads in his hands, looking imploringly up at every house, in the hope that some one would take pity on him.

How many ruddy windows he passed in vain, is of no moment to my story; many more, no doubt, than the 'Heaven-blessed' inside them would be best pleased to be told the plain truth about. How, for instance, one could not see the poor fellow; another would not; another did see him, from behind the curtain, or in a corner; another kept his hand so long undetermined in his pocket, that the wretched creature was gone when he wanted to send him out a sixpence; another had paid his poor rates that day, and 'done his duty;' another had been so often betrayed by his feelings into giving injudiciously,

that 'it behoved him to be more careful for the future.'

But still hoping—on the 'black' moved from house to house, for to sleep in the streets such a night as it promised to be, or even under a shed in the fields, or in a cart, or coal-hole, was not to be endured without a struggle; and Abel, though a slave-born negro, had seen better days, and was not a beggar. So, Abel 'moved on' up High Street, till he came to Ship Street; which having a 'well-to-do' look about it, as if Heaven had been very good to it, he turned down it, praying the Great Giver it might 'bring him enough to buy him something to eat and a night's lodging.'

It brought him to Market Street, and that was all. He could distinguish several faces, by the ruddy glow of the blazing hearths, vacantly staring at him; but possibly it was too cold for them to move from their fires, or he might have fared better. Nevertheless the Great Giver had heard him, and was even then—when the poor 'black's' heart was fainting within him, as the evening closed in and the bitter night had literally to be met face to face—earnestly moving a kind heart in his behalf.

At the end of Market Street was the Broadway, as it is called, principally used on Saturdays by the

corn-dealers ; here and there about which are some of the handsomest old houses in the town, the residences of some of its wealthiest citizens. One of which was of considerable note at the epoch under notice, owing to the eccentric habits of the rich old lady living in it, and the profound respect paid to the memories of her father, and grandfather before him, both of whom had been Mayors of the old Borough, and ‘died worth mints of money !’

Greystone House, as it was named from its being the only house of that material in the Broadway, was a large, bold, business-looking edifice, standing back some ten yards from the road, of rather modern, pleasing aspect, and apparently still fully according with the glorious accounts given, of its palmy past times, when not a merchant’s house within the liberties did the business that Greystone House did. But times were changed. The old heads lay at rest in their graves ; grandsire and sire had acted their busy parts on life’s stage and passed away, full of wealth and honors ; leaving the last of their line, one Joyce Balfour, spinster, sole and absolute mistress of a fortune, only to think of which turned many pale, who had hopes under her will, ‘wondering what she would do with it all ?’

Well, it was on the causeway in front of Greystone

House that the poor 'black' stood with his ballads, shiveringly mumbling out what he meant to be the likeliest appeal he could think of to reach the hearts of the two ladies, seemingly drawn to the window, out of pity, by his doleful ditty. Evidently they were regarding him with commiserating looks. Both were in deep mourning. The young lady was in widow's weeds; her companion, seemingly bent with age and infirmity, though stern-featured, had, to poor Abel's eye, by no means a hard heart, 'or why put on her spectacles to draw him nearer to her, when it would have been so easy for her to have kept her chair and turned her back and not seen him?'

"Oh!" cried Anne Balfour, rising from her seat before the fire, and going to the window, at sight of Abel's piteous face through the wire blind, "what an object!" At which Aunt Joyce lifted herself up with the aid of her hooked stick, and hobbling to the window, must have a look at the poor negro-man, as if she cared for none else just then.

In truth, it was a most lucky moment for poor Abel; for the ladies, whose pitying eyes were on him, were then in mourning—though twelve long years had passed since his death—for one near and dear to them, whose death at Antigua, in the West Indies, and another grievous loss, had clothed them

from that day to the present in black, and filled their hearts with interests for the slave-race, by whose steady toil and faithfulness Leonard Balfour, their master, had, from comparatively nothing, risen to be one of the richest planters in the island.

“Poor fellow!” exclaimed his widow, beckoning Abel to come to her from the frozen road where he was mumbling out his pathetic lament; “had house and home to go to once, I’ll be bound for it; and, yet, how he leaped for joy when they made him a freeman.”

“Ah, yes!” echoed Aunt Joyce, putting on her spectacles; “and came over here, what for, I wonder? To make his fortune may be? White skins suffer that? Poor idiot! Fresh come from the West, sure? Just the look of that other your poor husband brought over with him the time his uncle Oliver died and left him the Antigua lands; only got a pleasanter face, hasn’t he, and not such thick lips? Where’s Molly?”

“Gone down town to see her mother.”

“Ah, yes; ill in bed, so she is! And Hester laid up again—what’s to be done?”

“Sure, nothing’s easier, Aunt dear. Can’t I see what there is in the cupboard? And it’s hard if we mayn’t find a sixpence, too, somewhere, out of the

“lap-full it has pleased God to send me;” and away went the rich widow to bid Abel wait a little at the door, and then to see what the pantry had in it, suitable to the case—Ann Balfour, like Aunt Joyce, being a rigid economist, and, though it had pleased Heaven to fill her, to overflowing, with good things by the death of her husband, having no mind to meddle with the shoulder of mutton they had had for dinner, if there were any possibility of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked without it.

How was it to be done? There were some cold potatoes and the remainder of the suet-dumpling which Molly had put aside for her supper; but, besides these, there was nothing but the mutton, and the half-loaf of stale bread in the pan, till the baker called again; and what were a few cold potatoes to fill a fasting stomach with, especially on such a bitter-cold night as that? It made Ann Balfour shiver to think of it.

“He gives, and He takes away,” she said to herself, with her gaze on the meat. “But twelve years ago, and only two after our marriage, my husband was young and well and strong—where is he now?”—and she cut a thick slice off the joint and a thick slice off the loaf and put them, with the potatoes and the suet-dumpling, into a plate.—“Ah, poor,

dear Leonard ! he little thought he should be laid low so soon. Strange ! and hale and hearty as he was till within ten days of his death. Ah me ! who is safe in this mortal life ? My poor boy ! would he had been spared me !”—and seemingly forgetting what she was doing, she laid another slice of meat on the first.—“ God save us ! who can say to-day where they may be to-morrow ? There—there—if he can eat that he will do well. What shall I give him to drink ? There’s no beer, we never have any.” So having mixed a mugfull of hot milk and water, away went Ann Balfour to the back-door, before remembering that poor ‘ blackie ’ was waiting for her at the front ; when recollecting herself, she retraced her steps, wondering what had become of her head ? and delighted enough was Abel with the good things she brought him.

“ What’s your name, poor man ? ” she asked him, when he had emptied the mug at a draught.

“ My name, Miss ? Abel White.”

It accorded so whimsically with the colour of his skin, that ‘ Miss ’ could not help smiling. Taking which to mean ‘ how pleased she was with him ! ’ Abel showed his brilliant white teeth through his black lips, in token of his cordial approval ; and having added, for ‘ Miss’s ’ information, that he was “ one of the

emancipated from Trinidad, though he was born in Tobago ;” ‘Miss’ stood at the door after saying “good night, Abel,” till she saw him munching away at the victuals on a step under the door portico opposite, and then returned to Aunt Joyce.

They were talking of Antigua when widow Balfour saw Abel’s imploring face through the blind, and the strange coincidence of a ‘black’ from a sister-island presenting himself at the moment, might well enlist both their sympathies for him, come from parts as he had with which was mixed up so much that was most interesting and important to themselves.

What relates to Ann Balfour’s chequered history, as specially applicable to my story, will be best briefly told here.

She was the youngest of four sisters, and the plainest ; but Ann Boys had no rival at home for sound sense. It was what Leonard Balfour most wished for in his wife. He had been brought up in the faith that his mother and her sister, Aunt Joyce, were perfect patterns of what women ought to be, to make house and home happy. A Balfour’s happiness lay not in handsome faces and figures ; it was the intrinsic worth they looked at most. You could get any quantity of the staple commodities they

dealt in that you wanted, and could pay for; but was the Balfour *quality* also in perfection? They prided themselves on it; which had made the Shiphampton House of Balfour, Balfour and Son as famous as it was for nearly two centuries and a half.

Well, it was intended by his uncle Tristram, (who, though he married twice, was childless,) that Leonard, his orphan nephew, should 'walk in his shoes,' and succeed to the bulk of his wealth. A resolution, on uncle Tristram's part, most warmly concurred in by nephew Leonard himself, with the perfect concurrence of Aunt Joyce; though, in that event, instead of being the wealthy woman she became at the death of her brother, she would have had little more than five hundred a year instead of five thousand. But Tristram Balfour, rich and powerful as he was, was not to have everything his own way. There were others as purse-proud and positive as he was; and, among them one Basil Horne, Leonard's mother's cousin, an opulent Barbadoes planter, who having stood sponsor for the boy, by proxy, and never meaning to have one of his own, thought he would see with his own eyes whether Master Leonard was as promising a lad as his mother made him out; so, becoming suddenly affectionate, he had him sent over to him, in Barbadoes.

Leonard more than justified his mother's fond accounts of him. He was handsome, he was intelligent, he was gentle, and generous, brave as a lion, but of an endearing disposition, though sometimes a little hasty and heedless ; moreover, he took a huge fancy to his godfather Basil, which so pleased the rich sugar-planter, that he wrote home to say, " he would adopt him, if his conduct satisfied him, and make him his heir."

And till aged thirty, Leonard Balfour knew no will but his godfather's ; when up rose in Barbadoes one Otto Ghrimes, formerly of Tobago, but who, on the death of his uncle, came into possession of the valuable lands next Mr. Horne's. Rumour said he was the richest man in the island ; also that, though his only child, Zoe Ghrimes, was no beauty, she was very clever and accomplished, and would " roll in wealth at her father's death."

It tickled sweetly in Basil Horne's ears ; far more so than it did in his godson's. Certainly, Zoe Ghrimes was no beauty ; but if she had been the ugliest young woman in Barbadoes, Leonard might have been won over to his godfather's view of the matter, and cared nothing for ' perishables,' as Basil called them, provided she had possessed those sterling qualities for which the women of his own race had

been so eminently distinguished ever since the Balfours took root in Shiphampton. But, truth to speak, Zoe Ghrimes, besides being exceedingly plain, almost to absolute ugliness, was a vain, shallow-minded young lady, idle, listless, dressy, of an imperious temper, and accustomed to have her own way in everything.

It shocked Leonard to see it; it jarred with all his deep rooted notions of what a woman ought to be, to be that 'crown to her husband' which his great-grandmother, and grandmother, and mother had been to theirs, by all accounts, for more than two generations. But seeing how his godfather Basil had set his heart on getting up a match between him and the richest girl in Barbadoes, Leonard had recourse to a little stratagem to escape the trap laid for him, without offending his patron. He offered no resistance to his godfather's schemes for his happiness,—nay, listened to them with all due obedience; but "was in no hurry," he said, "to quit a home so deeply endeared to him as his was, and which more than ever held him its grateful inmate, when, broken in health as his benefactor was, and the estate wanting such constant looking after, what would he do without him?"

Zoe could not tell. It had not occurred to her till

Leonard mentioned it. It seemed quite reasonable. She supposed she should be married some day when her father wished it, beyond which she concerned herself very little about it. She liked Mr. Leonard Balfour better than any of the young men admitted to their table; was proud to call him her intended, and "would willingly marry him when papa gave the word of command; and she had no doubt she should be happy, for it was what she meant to be, wed whom she would."

So a sort of mutual understanding ensuing, to the effect that Leonard was to marry Zoe, and Zoe was to marry Leonard, "where was the use of hurry," agreed the elders, "with young folks like them?"—the one being only thirty, and the other not yet come to six-and-twenty; especially as Otto Ghrimes turned pale whenever he thought of losing his child, and it sent a cold tremor through Basil Horne, to think "what a dull life in the house all to himself his would be, when he was robbed of his right hand."

And so the courtship went on so entirely to the satisfaction of them all, that it became as settled a matter in Basil Horne's mind that his godson Leonard would—with Zoe Ghrimes for his wife—be the richest man some day in Barbadoes, as that he

should make him his heir and residuary legatee, because he had complied with his wishes.

In short, it all hinged upon that. Leonard's fortune, or the reverse, at his godfather's hands, depended on his implicit obedience. Godfather Horne must be master; and godson Leonard Balfour, though not his slave, perfectly well understood the terms he stood on with his wealthy and obstinate patron. He must obey. Nor till the advent of Otto Ghrimes on the island, at his brother's decease, had it ever entered Leonard's head to do otherwise. His godfather's will was law with him, as it was with every one else who ate his bread and received his pay in return for work done. Leonard was his head-manager, and so far had a will of his own, that his principal had seldom cause for complaint, and saw his interests so well cared for by his agent, that the more power he gave him, the greater and grander he grew himself.

But when came the Ghrimes' to dispute first places with them, and it so put godfather Basil on his mettle as to end in his getting up a matrimonial engagement between the two houses, poor Leonard thought of his mother, and grandmother, and great-grandmother, and for a while was almost tempted to throw up his post and face the worst, rather than

give his hand in wedlock to any woman on earth to whom he could not also give his heart.

Zoe, however, was so contented at home, and her father was so well satisfied to have her there all his days, if he could, and godfather Basil saw so little necessity for young people to "hurry into matrimony, when they could wed when they would," that Leonard curbed the rebellious spirit within him; accommodating it to his conscience that "in doing as he did, he had less his own interest at heart than his benefactor's." Which first 'white lie,' as he called it, having ceased to disturb him, one deceit led to more; till Leonard Balfour, with the best character for morality in the island, found himself so deeply involved in one scheme or another, to 'throw dust in his godfather's eyes,' that his life became wretched to him, and though but forty-two when he died, looked double that—he was so bent and broken.

How was this? and why was Zoe Ghrimes still maiden Zoe at his death?

It seems that shortly after it was a formally arranged affair between Basil Horne and his rich neighbour, Otto Ghrimes, that "the young people should be betrothed to each other, and the interests of the two houses thus cemented by their union, it occurred to Leonard that "he should like to pay old

Shiphampton and his uncle and aunt there a visit, if his godfather could spare him." He "felt it was his duty to do so."

"Go, then," said his godfather; "and tell your uncle and aunt what a good wife you are going to have, and how grand you will be—as grand as any of them, eh?" added Basil Horne, with a chuckle at the thought of his own share in the glory, and how Uncle Tristram's greedy little grey eyes would glisten to hear it. Nor was it otherwise than a fair feeling of rivalry in riches on godfather Basil's part, who had given little promise of ever being the wealthy man he then was, when, a headstrong youngster in 'the old house' in Shiphampton, nothing could persuade Tristram Balfour that he would ever be 'worth a penny.' Now he was worth nearly as much as Tristram; and in attaching Leonard so exclusively to himself, had gratified the pique there always was between the Hornes and the Balfours, both, originally, large colonial merchants in Shiphampton; and was proud to see him depart for the 'old house,' carrying with him such ample evidence of Tristram's error.

Uncle Balfour was well pleased to own himself mistaken; and Leonard cut quite a dash among the 'old folks at home.' But Aunt Joyce was not quite

happy on one point—this rich heiress of Basil Horne's choosing was by all accounts so unlike anything she had ever heard of in the shape of a Balfour, male or female, that it puzzled her to conceive "how one of their race, which Leonard happened to be, could expect to prosper, with such an antipodes to all the prescribed family rules, for his partner for life, as Zoe Ghrimes was? Zoe was indolent and listless, self-indulgent, of an imperious temper, impatient of restraint, luxurious, fond of ease and finery and flattery, took no pleasure in books, played a little on the harp and piano, painted charmingly on velvet, and could make the most beautiful artificial flowers and feather-screens and shell-baskets—but hated house-keeping. "How was a Balfour ever to get on in life with such a woman as that for his wife?" was what Aunt Joyce wanted to know.

And it was what Leonard could not tell her. Seemingly it was as much a riddle to him as to her; indeed he often felt "so concerned about it that he hardly knew what to think."

It set Aunt Joyce pondering night and day; and the more she thought of it, the stronger became her conviction that "all the wealth of the Shiphampton Balfours would have profited them but little, if it had not been for their women. The heirs-male of

their line acknowledged it—‘they owed more than half their prosperity to the industry and providence and painstaking of their mothers and sisters.’ And what would have become of them if they had married fools?”

Leonard listened. In truth, he had come all the way from Barbadoes to talk the matter over with somebody to whom he could open his mind. All the time he was crossing the seas Aunt Joyce was, in imagination, *vis a vis* with him in earnest conversation about Zoe Ghrimes. And now they were *tête-a-tête* in good earnest, it would have been hard indeed if he had disguised from his father’s sister, who knew him so well, what he had journeyed so far to tell her, viz.,—“that, but for the fear of displeasing his godfather, who had been so good to him, and had made him his heir, Zoe Ghrimes was certainly not the woman he would have made his wife of his own free will, if he could have helped it.”

“Nor must you ever do so, *without it*, Leonard,” returned Aunt Joyce, gravely. “And Zoe is not even handsome?”

It was a cunning stroke of Aunt Joyce’s. Zoe was ugly. And it so happening the same evening that an old flame of Leonard’s, one Ann Boys, the prettiest young woman anywhere to be found in

Shiphampton, came to drink tea with them at Grey-stone House, the contrast was so striking between Ann and Zoe, that Leonard had scarcely a wink of sleep for it ; and looked so serious next morning at breakfast, that both uncle and aunt Balfour were “positive something had happened.”

And so something had—Leonard was more in love than ever with his cousin Ann Boys.

He was of a confiding disposition when he felt sure of his friend ; and it was not long before Aunt Joyce was entrusted with a secret which he would have as soon thought of flying as to have breathed to his god-father Basil.

Aunt Joyce pulled a long face ; but she expressed no surprise. Basil Horne was rich, unmarried, childless, and would make Leonard his heir, if he pleased him ; which meaning that he certainly would *not*, if he offended him, it behoved Leonard, to be ‘safely off with the old love before he was on with the new.’ There was Zoe Ghrimes to think of as well as Ann Boys. Aunt Joyce saw it all as well as Leonard did ; but Ann came again and again to drink tea at Greystone House, and the Balfours went to drink tea at hers ; till godfather Basil, in Barbadoes, was almost forgotten amidst their pleasant meetings and merry-makings.

There is no need to dwell on this part of our story. Leonard, though a staunch adherent of god-father Horne's, was a Balfour at heart, as was also Ann Boys, his kinswoman. All the old home impressions returned a-fresh before he had been in Ann's company an hour. It was as if he were conversing with the companions of his childhood, with those dear old faces and forms with which were inseparably mixed up in memory all that was most praiseworthy and precious to him in life. He suddenly woke, as it were, from a deep sleep to the consciousness of how long he had been vainly dreaming of what he now, with eyes open and his wits about him, could see clearly enough, viz., that wealth alone was insufficient for happiness, that what his heart had been so long picturing to itself, as the best of all blessings, was the possession of such a woman as Ann Boys for a wife. "Why should he mate himself to misery if he could help it? What then would his wealth be worth to him? Did Zoe Ghrimes care, at heart, for him any more than he did for her? was she not wholly wedded to her own ways? cared she for anyone but herself? need he sacrifice himself so? was he not his uncle Oliver's pet? and, if he succeeded him in Antigua some day, how well-off he should be?"

It was what Aunt Joyce was also thinking of. Uncle Tristram preferred holding his tongue. He and Basil Horne differed in many things. Possibly there was a little jealousy on Tristram's part, as there often is where those wild, wicked ones we have prematurely consigned to 'the dogs,' disappoint their friends' expectations and rise to renown. Uncle Tristram would give no opinion. But this he would "emphatically declare before the face of all men, viz., that the family chronicles spoke no where of a Shiphampton Balfour having married a fool. Wise had been their wives and daughters at all times. Nephew Leonard had his own bed to make; and as he made it so he would lie."

Which being pronounced "sound sense" by Aunt Joyce, Leonard became very grave. His leave of absence drew to a close. His godfather was impatient for his return; for "his health was very bad, and he could do without him no longer. Mr. Simco, the overseer, was no substitute. And Zoe Ghrimes had two more admirers, one of them a very handsome dashing young fellow, who was teaching her to sing, and creeping up her father's sleeve."

It determined Leonard to go that very day and make Ann Boys an offer.

Of course Ann had heard of Zoe Ghrimes, and on

what conditions Leonard could alone hope to succeed to his godfather's wealth. Ann was overwhelmed with pride and joy ; but, though as self-reliant as Aunt Joyce herself, she was not so selfish but that she saw in a moment that "Leonard could only be hers by a sacrifice so great, that, if he ever deplored it, what happiness would there be for either of them, should his Uncle Oliver marry again, as old men did sometimes, and have a child ?"

So Ann hesitated to say *yes* to Leonard's offer, till she had consulted Aunt Joyce. She did not say *no*. But it was impossible for her to consider herself in the matter, and not the fatal consequences that would inevitably ensue to him if he disobeyed Mr. Horne by breaking off his engagement to Zoe Ghrimes, on which he had set his heart. "He would never forgive it."

"And what then?" urged Leonard, "if we are happy?"

It shook Ann a little. But a minute's reflection sufficing to convince her that in all worldly difficulties which seem easy to surmount by easy measures, reason should precede inclination, she held fast to her hold on Aunt Joyce ; with a promise "to be guided and governed by her, as in duty and affection bound, be the sacrifice to herself what it

might." May be Ann Boys was a little sly in this. If so, there were great excuses to be made for it. All her dearest hopes and interests were bound-up with the Balfours, of Shiphampton. She was an orphan. So was Leonard. Both of them owed much from early childhood to the guardian care and kindness of Uncle Tristram and Aunt Joyce; both were poor, both portionless, both called Greystone House their *home*, be where they might. But they were both earning their own living—Leonard, in Barbadoes, as his godfather's right hand, as he called him; and Ann at a spinster relation's in Dock Street, as confidential friend and companion to a rich, cross, exacting old lady, who recognized implicit submission in young females to their elders as the first of all virtues, and made the continuance of her favour and countenance to Ann Boys, in particular, dependent on her humbly serving her in all things to the end, as agreed on. So here was food for mutual sympathies.

Ann *did* serve her tyrannical task-mistress faithfully and well, and had all the rewards of an approving conscience; but sometimes longed, nevertheless, when the duties were done, for a kind word, in return, as well as a cross one, if occasionally it happened that, being human nature, she pleaded guilty to fall-

ing short of perfection. Luckily Aunt Joyce's arms were always open to her, and her heart, too, when she wanted counsel or comfort; and up to the time of Leonard's arrival among them from Barbadoes, Ann had resolutely devoted herself to her trying lot in life—it being Joyce Balfour's creed that “steady perseverance in a right course never failed of success in the end.” The Shiphampton Balfours had always found it so. Industry and patience had paved their way with gold. Their motto was ‘Long Enough;’ which signifying that they never lost by stopping short of success, if they could help it, “see what it had brought them to!—wealth and renown.”

But Ann had not spent three evenings in Leonard's society again, when ‘a change seemed to come over the spirit of her dream.’ Whereas before she existed only, now she lived. And the new life it awakened her to, gave such increased brightness to her looks and music to her voice, in short, made her so charming in Leonard's eyes, that she became too happy for her peevish, fretful old relative, and, but for her own sweet thoughts, Ann would have been very wretched.

Evidently Leonard regarded her with interest. Their lots were so similar. Nay, he looked and said things to her over their games at chess and back-

gammon, which, if there had been no such beings in existence as Zoe Grimes and Basil Horne, would have filled her with joy. But there *was* Zoe, and there *was* godfather Horne to be thought of; and however Leonard, in dear old Shiphampton, might appear to forget it, it was clearly Ann's duty to remember what was due to herself, and to show Mr. Leonard that Ann Boys, though at present poor and dependent, had too much of his own Balfour spirit in her, to play second fiddle to any woman on earth; much less to one who, by all accounts, was a very vain, idle, silly, shallow-minded person, and scarcely knew the use of her hands, or how to pick up her handkerchief if it fell, or cast up a sum in addition.

“Could a Balfour contemplate such a wife with common patience?”

Leonard put the question point-blank to Aunt Joyce, after telling her that he had that morning made Ann an offer.

His Aunt winked and fidgetted, as if it rather annoyed her to be expected to be always mixing herself up with godfather Horne and his “goings on.”

But it being indispensable that Aunt Joyce should speak her mind on a subject so material to her nephew's welfare and happiness; “without which, how could Ann know what to do?”—Joyce Balfour

was free to admit that "Ann was no fool; and at present, poor as she was, was richly gifted with those intrinsic qualities which would be a noble fortune in themselves, marry her who might, though she never brought him a half-penny. Wherefore," added Aunt Joyce, "considering Ann's expectations from her half Aunt, Agatha Boys, together with what Joyce Balfour's last will and testament may have in it for her, when she is dead and gone, I am of opinion, that before you elect to wed this woman or that, nephew Leonard, it is your duty to pay your uncle Oliver, in Antigua, the compliment of consulting him. Till when, Ann will do well to encourage no hasty hopes. Her good sense sees that. It would reasonably surprise uncle Oliver if, to please the Queen herself, you married without his sanction. Next to us, he is your nearest relation. He is not as rich as your godfather Basil Horne, but he is your mother's brother, and will give you the best advice. Be counselled by him. Write to him freely and fully. He is a just man, Leonard, and will do the thing that is right."

Aunt Joyce knew what she was about, and that she was not 'reckoning without her host,' in referring Leonard to his uncle Oliver, between whom and Basil Horne there was little cordiality of sentiment.

Ann, too, was a great favourite of Oliver Boys; and there was no doubt it would greatly please him to hear that Leonard had placed his affections on a woman in every way so worthy of him and likely to make him happy.

And it turned out as his uncle and aunt of Shiphampton had anticipated — Oliver Boys wrote straightway to both Leonard and Ann, expressing “the gratification their letters had given him; but preferring to see them before he committed himself to any decisive opinion.” Uncle Oliver was a prudent man, and had no mind to indiscreetly embroil himself in family feuds. But there could be no harm in Ann’s either “patiently waiting till he visited England next year, when they could talk matters over; or, if Miss Agatha Boys would spare her for a few months, he should be delighted to see her in Antigua, and pay all expenses.”

Leonard had returned to Barbadoes when this invitation reached Ann. It was of all things what she would most like to do, to visit Mr. Oliver Boys. He was her near kinsman, and had always been a kind friend to her; and with beating heart she placed his letter in Miss Agatha’s hand.

Amazement filled Miss Agatha Boys’ rigid face, as for the first time it was made known to her that

her confidential companion Ann Boys had dreamed of looking at any man on earth with eyes matrimonial, without her approval. Miss Agatha had been disappointed in love before she was twenty ; and the chief charm she saw in Ann was her apparent content with the shut-up life she then led, and her seeming determination to dismiss from her mind “such rubbish as that there was anything terrible in being an independent old maid.”

Let not the sternest virtues deem themselves proof against Cupid's shafts, till they have experienced what he can do when he is in earnest. Ann had loved Leonard more than all the boys, who loved her more than all the girls, in Shiphampton, when they were of the respective ages of fifteen and twelve. Since when she had thought a good deal more about Leonard than any heart knew of but her own ; and it is very likely that his blindness to Zoe's charms, in particular, had as much to do with the recollection of Ann's as anything else. Certainly no two could be more unlike than were Zoe Ghrimes and Ann Boys. Which renders it possible that when Leonard asked leave of his godfather Horne to pay his ‘old home’ a visit, bright visions of what Ann Boys might then be—grown to full womanhood—were mixed up with his longing desire to see dear old

Shiphampton again, and the loved old faces in Grey-stone House, far more than godfather Basil had any conception of.

But with that Agatha Boys, spinster, had nothing to do. Scarcely a day had passed during the eight years that Ann had been her companion, but they had discussed "the folly and weakness and cowardice of women relying on the heads and hearts and right-hands of the male sex for happiness." Was not Agatha Boys, spinster, a living example to the contrary? What reasonable comfort, under Heaven, was she not mistress of? Look from top to bottom of her house, and who had a nicer one? Yes, and whose hands had made it so but her own? "True," acknowledged Ann, with a suppressed sigh. And when Mr. Leonard, from Barbadoes, came to see them, she shewed him over it by Miss Agatha's wish; and he could not but grant, in Ann's ear, "it only wanted one thing to be perfect."

And now Ann stood confessed of an utter renunciation of the heroic sentiments which for eight years had been the bond of union between her and her patroness—Leonard's short stay among them had played havoc with her spinster principles. In short, she was thinking far more of the 'one thing wanting,' as Leonard looked at it, than of what she

possessed in abundance ; and while Miss Agatha read Oliver Boys' letter, it was easy to see with what unfeigned disdain she was regarding "such feeble-mindedness."

It sadly shook Miss Agatha Boys' faith in Ann ; so much so that she offered no impediment to her accepting uncle Oliver's invitation. In fact, Miss Agatha was glad of a temporary separation, during which she might recover from the shock that Ann's non-conformity had occasioned her ; and wished her 'God speed' on her journey with a solemn alacrity that made Mr. Boys' cordial reception of her in Antigua doubly pleasant. For Ann's sense of emancipation from a slavery worse than any negro's was not all she had to congratulate herself on. Leonard only waited her arrival at uncle Oliver's, to join her there ; "when you shall hear," he said, "about Zoe Ghrimes, and what she says of this new admirer of hers who is creeping up her father's sleeve ?"

It was quite true—Zoe had two more beaux. One of whom, the handsome, dashing one, was sitting on a hassock at her feet, singing Troubadour songs to her with his guitar, when Leonard returned.

Zoe was by no means embarrassed ; but received him just the same as if he had never left her. She was curious to hear about the last fashions in London,

and clapped her hands with delight at sight of the pretty presents he brought her. But her heart was evidently set on learning to play the guitar; and Leonard leant all the weight he could to induce her to do so. She was making great progress, under the handsome, dashing Mr. George Molyneaux, when Leonard set out on his journey to Antigua. She was in the middle of a love-song of his, Mr. George's, composing, when he went to take leave of her. He sat down till she had repeated it thrice. Then she smiled and nodded to the twang of the chords, as he wished her good bye; and plumping down again on the sofa, when he was gone, had an hour more of it with Mr. George. Though it is due to Zoe to say, apart from the pleasure she found in her new amusement, she cared, at heart, as little for Mr. George as she did for any one else who catered and slaved for her whims and caprices.

And now, for what remains to be told here of Ann Boys' history, or, rather, Ann Balfour's, before she became a widow, suffice it to say that, though uncle Oliver could offer no objection to Leonard's marrying the woman he loved, he saw no prudence in his cutting himself out of his godfather's good graces, which he certainly would do if he offended him. Basil Horne was breaking in health; his father died be-

fore he was fifty ; rheumatic gout ran in the family ; how much wiser to wait a little and see the turn of events before acting in any way rashly ?”

It was counsel not to be scorned ; and Ann, seeing the wisdom of it, leant all her little influence towards its adoption. She saw that she might, if she liked, by a look or word, leave Zoe no chance with Leonard, rich as she was ; but she plainly perceived, too, that, “by so doing, she would knock down at a blow all that Leonard had been building up for himself for so long in Barbadoes ; and what a sad thing that would be to think of for the rest of her days ! No, rather than have that to lay to her charge, they had better wait any number of years for each other ; aye, though it never pleased Heaven to unite them at all in wedlock.”

Leonard listened. He liked money and the consequence it gave its possessors as much as any one. But “though it was true that Basil Horne was a good deal broken with the climate, he might live many years ;” and said Leonard to himself, “Is it possible for me to avoid making Zoe my wife, if my godfather take it in his head some day to determine on our union ? It is assuredly what he will do at any moment, if the slightest suspicion crosses his mind that I am dissembling with him. Then what

would be the consequence ? Marry her I must, or be cut off with a shilling. Can I ever meet Zoe at the altar, though her father could give her all the wealth of the Antilles ? If not, and my godfather's health improve, how old shall Ann and I be—presuming Otto Ghrimes remain content, and Zoe, too—before we are free to safely please ourselves ?”

But Ann was firm. “ Nothing should induce her to be the cause of severance between Leonard and his godfather. He had promised her to abide by uncle Oliver's advice ; which was that “ he should let matters at Barbadoes rest as they were, at all events so long as there was no compulsion for him to give his hand in marriage to any but the woman of his heart. Till he was required to do which, he might perform his permitted part towards Zoe without any great shock to his conscience—seeing how many admirers she had, and that, come the worst, and his godfather decided on the nuptials, he would be free, as far as Zoe seemingly cared, to choose between poor Ann Boys and her little expectations, and a princely fortune that might well fill all the handsome, dashing young gallants in the island with jealousy—to think “ what a wonderfully lucky fellow Leonard Balfour was !”

So, there being no alternative but to be patient

and see what time might do for them, Ann obtained leave from Shiphampton to prolong her stay at Antigua "till Mr. Oliver Boys was tired of her." And more than twelve months elapsed before uncle Oliver began seriously to think whether—"now he was beginning to weary of waiting for when she would leave him"—she had better not make her home there? especially as Miss Agatha had now her niece Prudence to live with her, who was "so amiable and conformed to her ways in all things."

What could Leonard want more? Ann was a fixture at uncle Oliver's, within reach of him whenever he could steal away for a holiday from Barbadoes; Zoe, under Mr. George Molyneux's tuition, was singing serenades from morning to night; her father knew no pleasure equal to studying hers; godfather Horne was only too happy to leave well alone; and as to handsome, dashing Mr. George himself, there was little doubt, happen what might, but that he would make a very good husband, singing and playing as beautifully as he did, if he stuck to his wife *after* marriage as devotedly as he worshipped her *before*.

But it is dreary work waiting for dead-men's shoes. Godfather Horne, since Leonard's return from Shiphampton, seemed to have 'taken a new lease' of life, as he termed it. Whereas, everybody

predicted that his life was 'not worth two years' purchase,' and that 'time had not yet laid its little finger on uncle Oliver,' it was just the reverse. Basil Horne grew stouter and stronger. Poor Oliver Boys had hardly congratulated himself on his acquisition of a housekeeper in Ann,—who would allow of his taking regular exercise every day, to keep down that tendency to corpulency which his doctor told him 'was the only bar to his living beyond three score and ten,'—when rather over-doing it one day, he returned home exhausted, lay in bed for a week, got up and about again for a little while, did his best to convince Ann there was nothing the matter with him, talked of the 'walks he meant to take daily for six months,' and before a fortnight was laid in his grave.

What a sudden change of fortune for Leonard! Well if he knew how to use it wisely. Under excitement, Leonard was apt to be heedless, rather from a too sanguine temperament than because he was selfish. So though he was now a rich man, letter after letter came from uncle and aunt Balfour, at Shiphampton, dissuading him from "breaking with his eccentric godfather by a too hasty declaration of his passion for Ann." For Basil Horne by no means relished the idea of losing Leonard's ser-

vices, nor of his being so independent of him ; and it was no part of the Greystone House policy to counsel any member of it, near or remote, to incur future pains and penalties for present possession. In fine, “ Ann was to return to Shiphampton, with her five thousand pounds’ consols, just bequeathed her, and live with uncle and aunt Balfour till they knew Basil Horne’s further mind about Zoe. Till when it was Leonard’s duty and best wisdom to do all he could to please him. What were a few years to wait—supposing he had to wait—for such a fine fortune as would be sure to be his, if he were patient and prudent ? What knocked down so many in their mount upwards in life, just before they reached the hill-top ? Irresolution. What had carried the Balfours, in all and through all, to the top of the ladder ? What were the four indispensable qualities to raise the poor man to honour and opulence ? Industry, honesty, perseverance, and frugality. Yes, and though he were industrious and prudent and frugal, he might miss of his aim, without patience, which was the best of all virtues, the safest and surest receipt for success.”

Leonard granted it. And had it not been for a trifling circumstance that occurred between himself and his godfather, touching Zoe Ghrimes’s surprising

proficiency on the guitar, under Mr. George Molyneux, a day or two prior to Ann's intended departure for England, in all probability he would have dutifully deferred to the wisdom of heads older and wiser than his own — and well for him had he done so.

CHAPTER II.

LEONARD'S CROOKED POLICY AND ITS RESULTS.

UNCLE Oliver's death made Leonard Balfour a great man ; but it by no means increased his godfather's love for him. Basil Horne would have preferred keeping him a useful dependent on him till the end of his days, as the surest means of securing his services ; and was angry with Oliver Boys for dying and depriving him of so valuable an assistant. Basil Horne loved power. Leonard came to him poor, and left him rich ; and it remained to be seen how he would now carry himself, whether with all due recollection of what his godfather had done for him, and still meant to do, if he pleased him ; or, by ' riding the high horse,' he would so seriously pique him, as to forfeit all further claim on his love.

Between the Hornes and Balfours there had always been petty jealousies ; and as the Boys took the Balfours' part, the Hornes regarded them only in

the light of wealthy, opulent kinsfolk. So Basil Horne's extraordinary interest in Leonard originated most likely in a spirit of rivalry towards Tristram Balfour, who had opposed Leonard's going to Barbadoes on the ground of Basil's imperious temper, and "what he himself would do for him if he stuck to business in Shiphampton." It mightily tickled godfather Basil's humour to think how he had won the lad from uncle Tristram; and it went far to reconcile him to what he called "the Greystone House airs and graces." But for the Boys he had no sympathies; and when he heard of Ann's arrival in Antigua, and saw how elated Leonard was about it, his brow darkened, and he got so cross and impatient, that nothing would satisfy him.

It was necessary, therefore, that Leonard should give all due weight to his knowledge of his godfather's testy, tenacious character, and, if he wished to be his heir, think well before he did anything so suicidal as to refuse a wife of his choosing for him, for the sake of Ann Boys. Basil Horne had pledged himself to Zoe's father beyond recall; he also knew perfectly well of Tristram and Joyce Balfour's active interests in Ann; which giving the spur to his counter-efforts, in Zoe's favour, it behoved Leonard to either submit to the force of circumstances and

bid farewell to all thoughts of Ann for a wife ; or, if he *would* have his own way, make up his mind to pay the penalty for it, as most assuredly he would.

And he settled it in a way that many clever-meaning people adopt, in extremity, with no other escape for them, as they think, but so to manage it, that, “come to the worst, they have hurt nobody but themselves ; which, after all, is no great crime, and need trouble them very little.”

Attached to Mr. Oliver Boys’ household circle was one, Faith Lincoln, his housekeeper, and chief home-manager before Ann Boys’ arrival in Antigua. She was a native of Trinidad, had a large mixture of English blood in her veins, was of pleasing manners and appearance, well informed, keen-seeing, active ; and though some said she could be ‘vigilant and unscrupulous enough in taking care of herself,’ Mr. Boys had found her honest, and always treated her with marked respect. She was a great favourite of Ann’s ; and Miss Ann Boys seemed to be no less a favorite of Faith’s. They took a fancy for each other from the first. Faith Lincoln had a winning way with her, when minded to please ; and Miss Ann was made so welcome and comfortable by her at uncle Oliver’s, that it would have been strange indeed if Ann had not warmed towards the only female

attendant she felt she could freely converse with, simple-minded as she was, and unused to disguise her feelings.

And Faith warmed towards her new young mistress no less cordially; till there was so good an understanding between them that Miss Ann opened all her heart to her, including her devoted love for her cousin Leonard; which set Faith thinking how it would be most expedient for her to act, "with due regard to her own interests as well as others."

When I say *mistress*, Ann, regarding the matter relatively, hardly looked at Faith in that light. Whatever her mother may have been, her father was a gentleman, and Mr. Oliver Boys had never treated her as a menial. Nay, standing beside Miss Ann Boys, as far as externals went, Faith Lincoln was the more lady-like looking of the two. She had a handsomer face, though as dark as a gipsy's, and a handsomer figure, and there was that in her tone and manner and deportment which told of better blood and breeding than is usual with persons of her class. Faith was also well informed; care had been taken with her education; and rumour said that 'her father, though no scholar himself, was very proud of her; that he thought nothing too good for her, and would have married her well, and left her all his

money, but that he died insolvent before she grew up; and so she was thrown on her friends and obliged to get her living as best she could.'

Necessity by no means acts alike with us all. Some it nerves, some it unnerves; it spurs on this person, and paralyses that; there is no rule in the matter, further than that it seems to be a very active agent both for good and for evil; and none the less generally beneficial, act as it may, for developing the bad in us as well as the good; for "how else shall ye know them except by their fruits?"

It in no wise impaired Faith Lincoln's personal charms. On the contrary, it gave increased impetus to her proud blood, and fire to her eyes, and point and purpose to her every gesture and movement; and by teaching her the value of those winning ways which go so far in the world to make friends, added so considerably to her good looks, that if Mr. Boys had been matrimonially disposed, he might have placed at the head of his table many a less stylish wife than Faith Lincoln. But while it kept Faith's wits at work, to make the most of her pleasing person, it sharpened them also to the clear perception that, "if she would ever be the *real lady* she hoped for, she must trust to something safer and surer than her face and figure—hundreds of handsomer

ones than which she had seen come to nought. And why? Ah! there was the secret. It behoved Faith Lincoln to steer clear of *that* rock. She had her way to make in the world by her wits, and "neither vanity, nor indolence, nor indiscretion, should, if she knew it, defeat her."

She had been Mr. Oliver Boys' housekeeper about two years when Miss Ann first came to Antigua; and he was so satisfied with her conduct—notwithstanding the spiteful things said of her, as he conceived them to be, before she entered his service—that, at his death, she found herself richer by fifteen hundred pounds than when she first set foot on the island. It was a nice help to her, with the wide world again before her to breast and buffet, and she wrote to her friends in Trinidad, to "advise her how best to act."

Some were of one opinion, some of another; but all agreed that she "could not do better than consult one, Mr. Angelo Lyons, her late father's partner, and esteemed by all who knew him as a most upright and excellent man. He would take an interest in her which no one else would. He was a thorough gentleman, as well as a thorough man of business; she could not be better than in his hands; everything he touched turned to gold; he was rising

rapidly ; and every one said her father might have risen, too, to wealth and power, if he had been counselled by Angelo Lyons.”

It set Faith thinking. Her father began life well, and when joined in partnership by Mr. Angelo Lyons, was doing a good business as a merchant and shipholder ; not three years after which he fell into difficulties, and died deeply involved. But his estate had since paid twenty shillings in the pound, by the unflinching integrity and co-operation of Mr. Angelo Lyons, his partner ; and now, ‘out of the old ruins was rising,’ they said, ‘as promising a superstructure, of its class, as was to be found in the West Indies.’ Clearly, Mr. Angelo Lyons was a clever man. And Faith pondered, and pondered ; till at last it struck her what she would do ; and, with her customary calmness and resolution, she set about it.

Mr. Leonard Balfour offered her a home where she was—“a comfortable home, and every kindness he could show her ;” and Miss Ann Boys “made sure she would gladly accept it.” But Faith said no. Her heart was with her old home in Trinidad, where resided her mother’s sister, a widow lady in easy circumstances, who wished her to live with her. There she should be near Mr. Angelo Lyons, who would assist her to invest her little capital to advan-

tage. Remonstrances were in vain ; Faith's plans were formed ; she had accepted her Aunt Ruth's offer, and " owed it to her, in return for many services, to do all she could to please her. But it deeply grieved her to part with Miss Boys."

It wanted but two days to the leave-taking, when Leonard Balfour would be left alone. Miss Boys was to sail for England next night, and Faith was to depart for Trinidad the following morning. Then " how dreadfully dull the house would be !"

What answer, but one, could Ann make. " Zeal and patience were what they must look to, to bring all things right in the end. Oh, how often they had availed her in worse sorrows, where there was no other help !"

Poor Leonard gulped it down. He knew it was right. His trust in Ann was unbounded. A word from her lips was enough ; she had vowed to love him, and him alone, to the end of her days ; and she would keep her word. But must he part with her ? and, if he did, who could say they should ever meet again ? How short and uncertain was life ! See how suddenly his Uncle Oliver was cut off ! Was it inevitable that Ann must leave him ? Why was it ? But for Zoe Ghrimes, she would have been his. His godfather could but disinherit him ; and

what would all the wealth of the world be worth without happiness?

"Very true, sir," agreed Faith Lincoln, in whose hearing it was said. "Nothing!"

Whereupon ensued a long and earnest cabinet-council between Mr. Leonard and Faith, relative to the next day's intended doings; and "how far he ought, as a man, to make his hopes of happiness in this world secondary to any other consideration on earth?"

Faith felt all the more inclination to speak her mind freely on the subject, from her intimate knowledge of Mr. Basil Horne. Indeed, he was distantly related to her, and more nearly so to Mr. Angelo Lyons, her late father's partner, whose sister married a Horne; though there had never been any great friendship between them. Still she knew enough of Mr. Basil Horne to be sure of this—he was immovably fixed to whatever he had thoroughly made up his mind to, and would never leave a shilling of his money to the man who married a Boys or a Balfour. He had sworn it when Miss Ann came to Antigua, and change him who could?

"Then," said Leonard, proudly, as he thought of his independence, "I suppose I must either wed Zoe Ghrimes, or wait till Mr. Horne is no more, when I can please myself, I presume."

Faith saw no alternative.

"There is just one other way," smiled Leonard, turning pale.

"Pray, don't be rash, sir," counselled Faith.

"To do neither," rejoined Leonard; "but to marry Miss Ann out of hand, and so settle it for ever and ever."

"Amen, sir!" said Faith, "if it would be for your happiness, and hers. Miss Ann is a dear young lady—worth a vast deal more than all the silver and gold!"

It was exactly what Leonard was thinking; and decided him to go at once to Ann and overrule her objections.

Ann was startled. Every sense of propriety, of prudence, of policy, shrank at the thought of sacrificing the man she loved for the sake of herself; and it was long before she would listen to any such "cruel folly."

Faith would give no opinion; though she "perfectly well knew what she should do, if the case were her own."

Ann leant an ear to *that*.

"You would not let me marry another, would you, Faith, if you could help it?" asked Leonard.

"No, sir."

"Neither would you willingly act a deceitful part in the matter?"

"No, sir."

"Then, Faith, what would you do, to avoid both, and stand right in your own eyes, if you were Leonard Balfour?"

"It depends, sir."

"On what?"

"Whether Miss Boys thinks Mr. Basil Horne would ever be brought to consent——"

"To Mr. Leonard Balfour marrying *me*? Oh, no, never!" cried Ann; "never!"

"So I fear," echoed Faith.

"And if so," rejoined Leonard, calmly, "and we part (to Ann), and I go on deceiving him with the belief that I shall make Miss Zoe my wife, and he die, and make me his heir on the faith of it—how would the gold profit us when we got it?"

Ann had not thought of it in that light.

Nor had Faith Lincoln. But now Mr. Balfour mentioned it, it seemed to her that he was "very differently situated to what he was during Mr. Oliver Boys' life. He was no longer dependent on any one, and certainly had ample to marry the woman of his choice, if he pleased."

"And if I don't do which now," added Leonard,

"I see nothing for it but to either take Miss Zoe Ghrimes for better or worse, or be wearing such a double face always that I daren't look at myself in the glass."

It took the blood out of Ann's cheeks. It had never occurred to her before how Leonard's proud spirit would suffer, thus continually blushing for itself for her sake. How noble of him to acknowledge it! It made him look quite beautiful! Ann "did so like truth and candour; they went further with her than anything; convince her reason, and no woman on earth was more open to conviction."

So now all that was wanting to make Ann one of the cabinet council in good earnest, was to "convince her reason;" and how was that to be done, to Leonard's satisfaction, between then and the next day?

Faith asked for an hour or two to "turn it over." She had "a thought in her head;" and Leonard left her to hatch it, full of confidence in her skill and discretion.

Next day all three of them embarked for Trinidad.

Yes, Faith had "turned it over;" and it appearing to her that, as there was no particular hurry for Miss Boys' return to Shiphampton, so there could

be no reason why she should not see as much as possible of the Western Isles, while she had the opportunity. Mr. Oliver Boys meant to have taken her with him to Trinidad, if he had lived. It was a visit they had been looking forward to for some time. Mr. Leonard was bound, in a measure, to carry out his uncle's intentions; and Faith took it on herself to insure them a hearty welcome from her friends, when they got there. Her aunt Ruth, in particular, would be delighted to see them. A letter to Aunt Joyce, at Greystone House, was all that was necessary to apprise her of Miss Ann's prolonged sojourn among them; and, as Mr. Leonard had never seen Trinidad, he might "kill two birds with one stone, and, as was his uncle's intention, combine business with pleasure."

It may be here repeated that Faith's aunt Ruth was a person of good repute in Trinidad, to whom her husband, Mr. Enoch Lyons, a substantial planter, had bequeathed a very comfortable provision. There were ladies of better birth in the island, on the mother's side; but Mr. Enoch Lyons' ancestors were unimpeachable; and though Ruth Lyons had her detractors—nay, some went the length of saying very shocking things of her—she mustered round her elegant home a large circle of admiring

friends, ever ready to take her part and gladly partake of her hospitality.

My story takes but a glance at what else has to be told of Ann's history, previous to the bitter cold night on which the reader first made her acquaintance, when she and Aunt Joyce were comfortably sitting in the front parlour of Greystone House, pityingly looking at 'the poor black' in the road, casting imploring glances up at the window.

Ruth Lyons received her visitors from Antigua with much warmth, and made them so welcome and happy that Ann got quite dissipated, what with one elegant entertainment or another; and Leonard so gay and heedless, that before they had been a fortnight in Trinidad they had settled it that "happiness in this fickle world was the thing to be thought of before riches." Which granted, it followed, that, "though we are certainly creatures of circumstances to a great extent, we are so far free agents as to be capable of controlling circumstances, in the majority of cases, much easier than we choose to suppose." Which being also incontrovertible, "what would ever recompense either Leonard Balfour or Ann Boys, if, for the thirst for lucre, they forfeited such a golden opportunity as was then within their reach to be happy for ever and ever?" In short, as the

day for Leonard's return to Antigua drew nearer, and nearer, and the hour for Ann's bidding him farewell, *perhaps for ever*, was definitively fixed, poor Leonard grew so pensive, and Ann so pale, that one fine morning they put an end to their tortures by doing that which could not be undone, when the parson had joined them together, and there was no convenient 'divorce-court' to fly to, if they altered their minds.

It was "very sly," every one said, "of Mrs. Ruth Lyons, to leave Trinidad for Jamaica so all of a sudden, and take her visitors with her, without wishing good-bye. What induced them to go there?"

None knew. They went. It was a 'nine days' wonder' why? When the gossips had something else to talk of—and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Balfour (to be) sailed for France, together with Mrs. Ruth Lyons and Faith Lincoln; where they were privately married, and spent their honeymoon. Twelve months after which, Mrs. Leonard Balfour gave birth to a son. That was incontestable. Though the event was kept so secret, as also the marriage, that whoever else was privy to it, least of all had godfather Horne, of Barbadoes, the slightest suspicion but that "it only rested with him and his rich neighbour, Otto Ghrimes, to say the word, and such an

amalgamation of wealth and power would be cemented between them, as would make the Greystone House people open their eyes when they heard of it!"

Why there should have been so much mystery and concealment about a marriage that might have been made known to the world, without shame to any one, may seem strange. Possibly the parties least desirous of it were Ann and Leonard themselves. May be they yielded to others' opinions. Certain it is Mr. Horne, Leonard's godfather, was kept in ignorance; as was also indolent, indifferent Otto Ghrimmes; till one day it came on them like a thunderbolt—but of this in its place.

Leonard Balfour left his wife in France under the matronly wing of Mrs. Ruth Lyons, who had taken a romantic liking to her; Faith also promising to be unto her "a kind help and constant attendant at all times, as long as they wanted her services." It was "immaterial to Mrs. Ruth Lyons where she resided;" Faith "liked France exceedingly;" and as for poor Ann herself, she "could have lived there or anywhere else happily enough, if only her beloved husband could have lived with her. To part with whom, when he was obliged to return to Antigua, was a struggle for Ann that nothing on

earth would have persuaded her to encounter but his promise that he would — come what might — rejoin her at fixed periods ; yes, and ‘declare to the world their union the moment she wished it.’

Alas ! for the greed of gain. Ann was a Boys by birth, and Leonard was a Balfour. Who could truly say of either house that it ever lost aught by self-indulgence ? *Employment, not enjoyment*, was the ruling canon of them both ; and, be sure, Uncle Tristram and Aunt Joyce had a word to say on the subject, when called on, in confidence, by Ann for counsel and comfort in her perplexity.

Certainly the infirm state of Mr. Basil Horne’s health favoured the presumption that his days were drawing to a close. He might live years, or be taken off, like his father was, suddenly. He was fat and wheezy, and full-blooded and short-necked, and if he went into a passion, which he often did, foamed at the mouth so, it was frightful ! “So, would it be prudent, would it be proper feeling for him,” suggested Aunt Joyce, “to perhaps shorten his days by a communication, that—take it how he might—would assuredly be such a shock to him ? Whereas, if it pleased Heaven to call him away *before* it was made known to him, they could never have it laid to

their door that by any act of theirs they had caused him a pang."

"What could Ann do? Since girlhood, and she had no mother to go to for love and guidance but Aunt Joyce, she had been Ann's refuge and referee in all trials and troubles: and now was she to give heed to this, 'Auntie's counsel' or not? It was a hard struggle—prudence pulling one way, and passion the other. Leonard, too, gave her no help. Nay, left to himself, it seemed to be the last thing he thought of—whether his wealthy godfather lived one year or a hundred. For "had he not enough already in Antigua, without troubling and torturing himself, waiting for dead-men's shoes?"

"Still, if," as Aunt Joyce prudently put it, "Mr. Horne's health gave them little hopes of his surviving another attack, such as he had last time, would they ever forgive themselves, if, to gratify the wish uppermost, they laid him on a sick bed again, and perhaps killed him besides?"

It merited grave reflection. Both Uncle Tristram and Aunt Joyce were, "perfectly clear about one thing—what they should do if the case were their own. More fortunes in this world were forfeited by haste and intemperance than anything else. What, if they paid the penalty of their little indiscretion,

in acting as they had done without first consulting Aunt Joyce, and let, say twelve months elapse before they made public their union, should it not have reached Mr. Horne by then, and his health were improved? What was a year's self-sacrifice in comparison with perhaps a whole life's unavailing regrets? They must give it their serious consideration. If it reached Barbadoes that they were married, they must bear the brunt of it as best they could; but if not, and Mr. Basil Horne should be called away (as many thought he would be long before twelve months more,) how deeply they would deplore any precipitancy on their part, the certain fatal consequences of which to themselves they might reasonably hope to avert by present prudence and forethought."

And was not this "precisely Mrs. Ruth Lyons' view of the case?" And had Faith "two opinions about it? A year! What was that, as Aunt Joyce said; what were twelve months to wait, compared with the cruel separations many thousands of no less loving hearts than theirs had to endure, for prudence sake? Twelve months! It might not be three. Who, in their senses, would rashly kick down such golden hopes as Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Balfour would be sure to realize, with a little patience? Three months! A man who, broken as Mr. Basil Horne was, went

into the dreadful rages he did for the slightest cause, might be taken off in a moment. Could there be a more charming country to live in than France? Time flew so fast with her, Faith Lincoln, that, for her own part, she didn't know how she should ever be able to exist, if obliged to return to that *triste Antigua*."

But it was compulsory for Leonard to make it his home for a while; he had no option; and off at last — poor Ann found how much easier it is, when severed from the loved one, to valiantly preach and prate about patience than to practise it.

And here Ann Balfour's early married history is involved in mystery. Clearly, she resided in France for some years, while her husband kept house in Antigua. Unquestionably, too, she presented Leonard with a son and heir within twelve months of their marriage. And no less certain is it that godfather Horne, of Barbadoes, was kept in profound ignorance of their nuptials — by no means a difficult matter, confined to his room as closely as he was with rheumatic gout, and being of a temper that no one cared to come in contact with, if they could help it; and, furthermore, his neighbour Otto Ghrimes having no eyes nor ears for anybody nor anything but his darling Zoe, and how to make money for her. Beyond

which, all is obscurity with regard to what befell Ann from the time she gave birth to her boy, to her painful separation from her friend Mrs. Ruth Lyons and Faith, after her loss of poor little Leonard in the strange way it happened at Pau, and his subsequent death, as made known to her in the heart-rending way to be revealed before the close of the story.

Suffice it to say here, that Ann went through much trouble during her forced separation from her husband in France; not a little aggravated by the knowledge of how unhappy it made Leonard, as well as herself, and how his deceit towards his godfather preyed on his mind and undermined his health so, that she was in perpetual dread lest that, and the insalubrity of the climate, should lay him on a sick bed and perhaps be his death. Ann had also another trouble to contend with—for she had taken a deep dislike to Mrs. Ruth Lyons. Why she hardly knew, at first; but since the birth of little Leonard, her former confidence in Ruth Lyons had changed into such a rooted distrust, that she obtained her husband's consent to her occupying apartments of her own in the environs of Pau; since which, though Mrs. Lyons was "the same as ever, to all appearances, Ann "never met her," she told Leonard in

her letters, "but it sent a cold thrill through her heart." But she continued to like Faith exceedingly.

There was a pretty garden to the house near Pau, in the Pyrenees, in which Ann Balfour resided, with umbrageous walks round it, and fruits and flowers in abundance; which were what Ann loved, for "they put her so in mind of *home*, and of the joys she hoped yet to taste again before long, when called by her husband to fill the social position she was entitled to hold as his wife."

And Ann would take her baby out with her among the roses and pinks and sweet-peas, and under the pleasant shade of the poplars and acacias, in summer, sit for hours with him in her lap, thinking of his father, and "when the longed-for day would come that was to make her the happiest of wives and mothers?" And when other duties kept her in-doors, her nurse Faith Lincoln would take baby-boy for a walk round the strawberry beds; and then through the shrubberies into the cherry orchard; and then ascending the hill-side till she came to her favourite wild thyme and violet bank,—from which she and baby could discern dear mamma if she came into the garden,—there sit down with little Leonard in her lap, and read, or work, or think away the

sunny afternoons under the beech-trees, till it was time to go in again.

Nor had Ann Balfour any reason to complain of Faith's vigilant care of her precious charge. For no mother could devote herself more entirely to her duties than did Faith, from the moment Master Leonard held out his little arms to go to her—which was proof positive how he loved her, and how wisely his mother had done in selecting her for the place." So Ann, when unable to take baby-boy out herself, saw his nurse wind her way to the beech trees with him, till she could rejoin them, or they her, with as little doubt that she should see them back safe and sound again in due time, as that "God was very good to her, and had innocent little babies like her darling boy especially under his protection." And no doubt God was. But it pleased His inscrutable wisdom and goodness to bring further affliction on Ann—and that same afternoon of darling baby-boy's last sleep in Faith's lap under 'the beeches,' was a heart-rending one for them all.

It seems that, lulled to rest in her lap, little Leonard 'fell off,' as usual; when giving way to the irresistible drowsiness that stole over her, from the heat and stillness and hum of the heath-bees round her, Faith leant her back against the trunk of the

tree they were sitting under, and when she woke from the deep sleep it produced—woe! woe!—baby was gone,—nor did all the bitter tears and lamentations, and searchings and scourings of the country that followed, ever bring him back again.

But the robbers, whoever they were, had left a bundle of old rags in the lap from which they stole the boy, to supply his place; and to these poor Ann had alone to look, in her anguish, for any possible clue to his discovery and recovery some day. It was the sole hope left her, after the police ‘could do no more;’ and how she clung to it, in the teeth of despair, what heart knew but her own?

Leonard Balfour was ill in bed when the dark tidings reached him of the loss of his child. It nearly drove him mad; and for weeks he lay—though it was not made known to his wife—delirious with the brain fever it brought on. Then he rallied so far as to be able to write and tell Ann “she would see him at Pau in as short a while as it would take him to journey there.” But before he was well enough to set off, came another tear-soaked epistle from Ann, worse to bear than them all, to make known to him that their beloved boy was *dead*—that, as stated by the anonymous letter brought her by the post that day, he was “drowned at sea on the

Dutch coast, together with the two persons in charge of him, a half-caste gipsy-looking man and woman, who, after the wreck of the vessel, the *Jeanne Jules*, a French trader, struggled, with the child lashed to them, to get to shore, but were washed away, it was supposed, by the surf."

And this was all the letter said, except that "what it conveyed was the truth," and that "the boy was stolen for reasons, which—now he was no more—there was no need to trouble about."

Poor Leonard! If well nigh distracted before, at the thought of his loss, what help was there now for him? It crushed the last spark in him. Whereas, he had clung, like Ann, to the forlorn hope that Heaven would restore to them their treasure, now, abandoning himself to the despairing belief that he was forsaken of God for his wickedness in deceiving his patron, Mr. Horne, as he was doing, he was carried, frantic, to his bed again, and before the doctor's communication reached his wife, Leonard Balfour was laid in his grave.

Childless and a widow, Ann sought solace where alone she could find it. She had been piously brought up, and had often experienced the healing powers of faith and patience, under affliction; but never till now did she know what that compassionate

Saviour's bosom was, on which, in her utter helplessness, she humbly cast herself for aid and comfort. It recalled the nearly lost life in her; it raised her from her sick-bed; it returned her to her native home; it restored her, in her widow's weeds, to Aunt Joyce's arms; it brought her there, deeply smitten; and there it was still, in all and through all, for her to fall back on, when all else failed her. And whatever else of trouble was in store for her, when the poor 'black,' Abel, by name, came with his piteous looks and plaintive ditties that bitter cold night we spoke of at the beginning of my story, putting her in mind of her desolateness, Ann felt that strength in her which "could bear any load He might see fit to place on her, whose succouring arm was about and around her, and would never leave her as long as she leant on it thus."

And this bringing us again to Greystone House, and Aunt Joyce hobbling back on her tortoiseshell-handled stick to her comfortable chair by the blazing fire,—after seeing Abel through the wire-blind settle himself, with his cap full of bread and meat and pudding, on the stone step under the portico opposite, to enjoy it,—we will resume the thread of our narrative without further delay.

Naturally, the negro-face brought poor Leonard

to Ann's thoughts again, if indeed he was ever out of them; and closing the shutters, and drawing the curtains, she sat down, with the tears in her eyes, and for a minute or more dared not trust her voice.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH ABEL, 'THE BLACK,' PLAYS AN UGLY
PART.

FOR a minute or more Ann and Aunt Joyce sat buried in their own reflections ; when, seemingly bethinking herself of something, " Strange !" said Aunt Balfour—rather muttering it to herself, as she clasped her shrivelled hands tight in her lap, than speaking it aloud—" strange ! that none of the bodies were found, after the wreck of the *Jeanne Jules*, and she went down within half a mile of the shore."

Aunt Joyce had forgotten. She was getting old, and her memory failed her. Five bodies were found next tide, and among them the dead body of a gipsy woman ; but her husband was washed away, and the child with him.

This Ann had explained to Aunt Joyce often before ; and now she listened again, to quite under-

stand it. But somehow it seemed difficult to comprehend ; and even when she gravely nodded her head, as if satisfied, Ann saw that to the last she would cling to the belief, that, “as no one had seen the child’s drowned body, who could say he was dead ?”

The mere thought of it blanched Ann’s cheeks. To hope such a thing was, she felt, most fruitless. All the evidence she could collect went the other way. The wreck was a certified fact ; also that “there were a gipsy-looking man and woman, with a male baby in arms, exactly answering to the description of little Leonard, on board the *Jeanne Jules*, when she went down ;” also that “the woman’s dead body was washed ashore, but the man’s and child’s were never seen again.” Then what hope was there that her baby could have escaped, swallowed up in the waves as they were that dreadful day ? There was none. Yet did the mother, spite of herself, sit and vacantly gaze at Aunt Joyce’s ominous mutterings to herself, and shakes of the head, and “wonder she would not be convinced, after all she had told her.”

“No one has seen his dead body,” muttered Aunt Joyce to herself—drawn into a doze by the fire,—
“so how say he is drowned ?”

"Oh, God!" ejaculated Ann, giving vent to her misery; "what a burthen is mine!"

"Hush! hush! child," rebuked Aunt Joyce, rousing herself from her reverie; "say not so. He gives, and He takes away. Who are we, to dispute His right;" and then closing her eyes again—"Hum—hum—no one saw his drowned body," she kept murmuring—"then how say he is dead?"

A groan broke from Ann's breast.

"Hush! hush! child. Are we not His, to do as He will with us? He gives, and He takes away. His will be done!"

"Amen!" sobbed Ann; and going again to her 'comforter,' Aunt Joyce dozed and muttered on uninterrupted.

And thus they sat in silence for some minutes; when suddenly waking—"Ann, child!" said Aunt Joyce, moving her chair closer to her, and clutching her tight round the wrist; "who is that Angelo Lyons, of Trinidad, eh? old Mr. Lincoln's partner? Don't you know? Next of kin to Basil Horne, to be sure, after your husband. Took the name of Lyons, didn't he, with the Tobago estate, left him by his kinsman Enoch? Ah, then, mind, child—it's well for you that Oliver Boys did what he did

for Leonard ; else, it's little, methinks, Basil Horne would have done for Ann Balfour."

Ann looked bewildered.

"Don't you see, child—now your husband is gone and your boy, too, eh ? eh ?—who comes next ? Angelo Lyons, eh ? Yes, yes ! Though, by right, he stood before Leonard. But Basil was always afraid of him, and had Leonard there to keep him company. And now—eh—eh—how will it be ?"

"I know not, nor care," sighed Ann.

"For his money ? No, no, child ! Thank the Great Giver ! you can do without that. Ah, my child ! it is little we need here, to prepare us for hereafter. Heaven be praised ! you have ample, and over. But you see—this Angelo Lyons stands first *now*—if—if—" and Aunt Joyce tightened her grasp of Ann's wrist—"Basil's heart don't melt towards you, as it may at last, when his hour comes, and he thinks of what Leonard did for him. Whether or no, it's Angelo Lyons stands next *now*. Aye, aye, God's will be done ! But least of all need *he* weep for what has happened. Hist, child—it's a dark, deep mind that of Angelo Lyons'. But Basil Horne's is not a bad heart, left to itself—no, no !"

"Hark !" said Ann, as sounds of some one moving below caught her ear.

"It's Hester has got up, and come down for a little, be sure," smiled Aunt Joyce, pleased to think she was better. "And it's my belief, child," she continued, without heeding Ann's listening ear, "Basil Horne's heart *will* yearn towards you, say or do what they will. He never approved of Angelo Lyons' quick rise after Gilbert Lincoln's death. Oh, it's a dark, deep mind that of Angelo Lyons'! Well Basil may fear him. It used to turn your uncle Tristram's face as white as a sheet, when——"

"Hark!" repeated Ann, rising and going to the door—"I fancied——"

"So did I," said Aunt Joyce, raising herself up, and hobbling into the passage—"that some one crossed the hall—Hester! Hester!"

But, if within hearing, Hester answered not; and aunt and niece looked at each other, dumb-struck.

"I heard a foot-fall," said Ann, dropping her voice, as she stepped towards the stair-head leading to the kitchen, "or my ears deceived me."

"The rat, maybe," muttered Aunt Joyce; but, nevertheless, visibly perplexed, as there had been many robberies in Shiphampton of late, and it was well known she kept large sums of money in the house.

Ann listened at the stair-top.

All was still. When recollecting that she had forgettingly gone to the back door, instead of the front, with her plate-full of food for the poor 'black,' and that very likely she had left it unlocked, and so it had been blown open, perhaps, by the wind, Ann, who was no coward, returned to the parlour, lighted the taper on the mantle-shelf, and bidding her aunt sit down again, had reached midway between the stair foot and the kitchen door, when thinking she heard something move in the dark closet under the stairs, she was hesitating whether to look in it, or not, when suddenly the light was blown out, and before she could utter another cry—after the piercing scream with which she struggled to escape from her assailant,—was silenced for ever by a blow that laid her dead on the stones. Not two minutes after which, aghast with fright, yet summoning by a superhuman effort all her remaining old strength, to hobble to the rescue, came Aunt Joyce, face to face with features that to have seen once was to know them for ever; and staggering back at the sight of them—it was no part of the murderer's design to ever be identified, if he could help it, by those piercing old eyes, agonizedly rivetted on him; so he had but to raise his arm again—and then—when what

else was done that had to be done—get away as fast as he could from the scene of slaughter.

Molly, the cook and housekeeper, was down town, visiting her sick mother, and had leave to remain with her all night; and Hester was ill in bed upstairs, safely sleeping, under the promise made her by Mrs. Ann Balfour that “she herself would see to the fastening up of the house, and all else appertaining thereto, before they went to rest.” And Hester’s sound sleep, from the composing draught the doctor had given her, brought her to the early morning without waking; when taking a drink of the barley-water by her side, she lay down again, nothing doubting but that “Molly would bring her her breakfast as usual, and good, kind Mrs. Ann Balfour come and see her, and read to her from the Bible.”

But it happening that Molly’s mother was worse, so that Molly could not leave her, to be back as soon as she wished, the clocks struck half-past six; and as no one was moving below, Hester sat up to listen. Till seven striking, she began to “wonder where Molly was,” and to “wonder, too, that so early a riser as Mrs. Ann should have overslept herself so long.” But when eight came, and seemingly there was no one to answer the repeated rings at the back

door bell, Hester got uneasy, and huddling on her clothes, went out on the landing to hearken. Another ring! Determined by which, and anxious to ascertain if Molly had come in, she descended to the basement, and must have passed, on her way to the kitchen, within a step or two of the murdered bodies, that she made so sure were safe and snug in their warm beds, while she was striking a light.

The lighted candle showed her that Molly had not returned, that the back door was locked and bolted, and everything in its place, "as was always looked to by Miss Balfour or Mrs. Ann before going to bed. So of course Molly's mother can't be no better," said Hester to herself, "or Molly would have been back. But how strange that Mrs. Ann isn't up, and she's never a-bed after six. Suppose I go and see. Oh, dear! how dull it do seem—no one about by now." Whereupon extinguishing the candle, which made the passage to the stairs so dark that, with her thoughts on Molly and her mother, she overstepped the stair-foot a little—Hester was brought to recollection by "stumbling over something in her path;" and when Molly, with the police, obtained an entrance presently afterwards—but that poor Hester did just breathe when lifted up from her frightful bed, there would have been none

left in the old house for Molly to mingle her tears with, and seek companionship and consolation from, in her bitter woe.

Oh, what a day for Shiphampton! Who shall depict it? The direst poverty, struck down by the assassin, collects its gaping crowds, and loudly claims its rights at the hands of justice; but when ran the breathless tidings from street to street, till not a house within twenty miles but was ringing with it, that "the richest woman in all Hampshire had been foully murdered, as also her rich niece, and that they were found, next morning, close to their own kitchen, weltering in their blood," then was to be seen what wealth and rank and position stood for in men's minds, when suddenly laid low, over and above the humble, insignificant life which, when lost, if it hurt nobody, benefited none.

Such a panic had never been known in Shiphampton before. Its richest House was gone. Sturdy men talked of it with white lips, while their pale frightened women and children gathered together, aghast, in corners, and eagerly looked at each other with straining eyes, and bated breath, for any and every additional horrible particular they could draw from each other, with shudders, with which to spice the horrid feast. While on went rumour with its

endless tongues, first pointing to this person, as the culprit, then to that, then to the other, as the whim seized them, till the old town was beside itself. When came a cry—"They've got him!" And the crowd round the Town Hall, to catch a sight of 'the black's' guilty face, as they took him before the magistrates, must have struck terror indeed into Abel's soul—with that blood on his clothes, scarcely dry, which he said "came dere from me cutting me, hand while eating de bread and de meat giben me by de young lady."

"Guilty! guilty!" yelled the mob; and the old town breathed again at the glorious thought of "the law's omnipotence."

Clearly, appearances were against the man Abel, 'the black;' nothing could look uglier. He had been seen begging at Greystone House; and shortly afterwards a passer by "observed him go to the front door, and there stand, looking up at the windows, till a lady, in mourning, brought him some food which he went opposite to eat under the portico of the house facing it. And he was still in the same place when he, the witness, returned from his errand to Water Street; for he particularly noticed the way 'the black' seemed to bend himself all of a heap, to avoid notice; and then sat up again, as soon as he thought he

was unobserved; and then got up—for he, the witness, stood behind the corner of Harbour Lane and watched him—got up and crossed the road towards the back-way that led to the rear of the house, when he lost sight of him. Furthermore, he, the witness, was induced to keep his eye on him, from the man's peculiarly forbidding countenance, which forcibly struck him at the time as the most ferocious looking negro-face he had ever seen in his life; and he told his wife so when he got home, and it had haunted him ever since."

Which bringing all eyes in court on the accused, certainly his gloomy, downcast mien, coupled with a contour of features exceedingly unprepossessing, pleaded little in his favour; and the presumptive supposition of his guilt being very strong, notwithstanding his indignant denials, Abel was remanded in due form, for further evidence against him before committal on the charge of murder.

Then, when he was brought up again, Abel was calmer and more collected, and had his own tale to tell the court.

"It is true," he granted, "that me was hungry; and dat de young lady in de black, beside de old lady wid de spectacles on at de great big house wid de fire blazing, looked at me ober de blind, and called

me to de door, and told me to wait dere till she come back ; and then did come and gib me de bread and meat and de pudding, which me did take and eat on de steps under de house opposite. And when me was cutting de meat into bits to put in me pocket, me cut me hand, and dat was how de blood did come on me clothes, dat's true. But no, me neber did go to de back at all, me didn't, dat not true. But when me got up and did cross de way, me saw a man, me did,"—and he shewed his ivory-white teeth at the recollection, and grinned at the Bench,—“a man who run into de road from de front, and come round by me, bolt ! and when me did look at him, he turned quick away he did, down de street to de riber, and—and—dat dere is all me know, and me cannot say no more, dat's true.”

“And where is the knife he says he cut his hand with, while cutting the meat ?” asked the chairman, addressing the policeman who took Abel in charge.

“It wasn't anywhere on his person, when we searched him, your worship.”

“Do you mean to say he hadn't a knife ?”

“Not that we found anywhere, your worship ;” and down went Abel's eyes on the ground, as if crushed by it.

A murmur ran through the court.

"Silence !"

"Has search been made for the knife?"

"Yes, your worship."

"And no knife, answering the description, has been found, you say?"

"None," your worship.

"Me had de knife on de step," said Abel, looking up at the policeman by his side, "and me cut me hand wid it, cutting me meat, dat's true."

"If so, he may have dropped it somewhere," suggested the chairman, "and it may yet be found."

Whereupon there was remand the second till that day week, for further evidence; and the prisoner went back to his prison.

And on his next appearance before their worships, Abel had to face an ugly fact made known to the court that day, viz., that "no knife had been found answering the description given by the accused of the one with which he said he cut his hand the deep gash on it while, shivering with cold, he was eating the food he got from the young lady at Greystone House. Every possible search had been made for it, in vain; nor had any instrument been discovered, as yet, with which the murder could have been committed."

What said the prisoner at the bar?

Nothing for a minute or two, while all eyes in court were greedily devouring his downcast looks and sullen silence ; when seemingly roused by the thoughts working in him which he was trying to shape into fitting words for their worships—

“Me cut de victuals wid me knife on de step,” he said, composedly glancing up at the officer by his side, “dat’s true—me knife dat me Massa gib me dat day at Trinidad—me Massa, Mr. Merric Lincoln ob Tobago—dat day he come and say ‘Abel, cut de cord ob de box dere ;’ and me hadn’t me knife, and he say ‘keep dat, Abel, dat’s yours, dat knife, and welcome ;’ and dat’s true me cut me meat wid it, and cut me hand, it is.”

And it was spoken so apparently unpremeditatedly, and with such almost childish concern for the loss of his property, that the magistrates looked at each other, as if at fault what to think. But as the police stuck to it that “from sundry communications they had received, they had no doubt they should be able to make out a case to go to a jury, if time were given them,” back went Abel again to his lonely cell, to chew the bitter cud of his many woes, while the law was at work in his behalf—not the least of which seemed to be the irreparable loss of his knife. It appeared to distress him more than all the rest

put together, more than even the groans and hissing and hootings of the mob collected to catch a sight of his black face at the court house and the lock-up. He grinned at them, and shewed his white teeth and the whites of his eyes, as if in derision ; but his brow grew darker and darker when ‘no knife could be found,’ and he could give no satisfactory description of the man he said “came out ob de front door ob de great big house,” when he was crossing the road, “and did run against me so quick at de corner, dat we both slip down on de ice—and when me got up, de man was gone, dat’s true.”

But this ‘collision at the corner, on the slippery road,’ being a new feature in the case, not mentioned by the prisoner before, it rather told against than for him. And it further transpired what a vagabond-life he had been leading from town to town, with his bundle of ballads, for months past, while professing to be unable to return to his wife and children in Tobago, from want of means to get back to them, as also the several petty crimes that had been committed where he had shown his face, and which were now swelling the charge—what were the magistrates to do ?

Clearly, by all rules of justice—as, after more than a month spent in fruitless remands, there was

no case to send to a jury—to forthwith release the accused ; and be very sorry, if he were innocent, that he had suffered so much at their hands ; but still more so, if he were guilty, that the “omnipotence of the law,” as they called it, was often so impotent to vindicate itself as it should do.

Abel White was at large. And so convinced were some ultra-philanthropical old ladies and gentlemen of his innocence, in the teeth of the almost universal belief in his guilt, that a sum of money was collected in the town, wherewith to ship him off to Tobago. Where he arrived “hale and hearty,” they said, “though never ceasing throughout the voyage to deplore, above all things, the loss of his knife ; over the thought of which he would shed tears, when talking of it ; for he declared he ‘lubbed it as he lubbed his life.’”

But Abel never seemed willing to be questioned about the man he said came out of the front door of Greystone House, and ran against him at the corner of River Street. Or if he deigned to give any further particulars on the subject, there was always a strange reserve in his answers and manner, which sometimes left the impression on the captain’s mind that he knew more than he chose to acknowledge ; and that, though his, Abel’s, was not the

hand perhaps which struck the blows, he was not as ignorant as he pretended to be of whose murderous arm it was by which the unfortunate ladies came by their dreadful death. It was strange, too, that he should have been so near the house all the time, and seen no one go in, nor heard any noise. And if access had been obtained to the kitchen by the back way, how was it the yard door was barred and bolted, and the scullery door locked inside? True, the murderer might have got in and concealed himself somewhere, before Mrs. Ann Balfour fastened up, after Mary Balls left to go to her mother; in which case, he might have quitted the house, after the murder, by the front door, as Abel had said. Or Mrs. Ann Balfour might have forgotten to fasten the scullery door, which opened into the yard, and so the murderer had got in that way, and, as a blind, locked and bolted it, before his escape. Still, how was it possible that two persons could be brutally slain, as the old lady and her niece were, on the same spot almost, by one man? Or if they were, was it likely any one, not deaf, could have been sitting where Abel was, under the portico of the house opposite, and known nothing about it? It was very mysterious. And, truth to speak, Abel's evasive manner, when narrowly interrogated thereon,

was, to say the least, anything but favourable to himself. But for this he appeared to care nothing, his thoughts being seemingly engrossed with the loss of his knife, and the little likelihood there was of his ever seeing it again. He was continually dwelling on it, and on "how it must have dropped from me pocket, when de man ran against me, and me slipped down, and de man, too."

This he firmly adhered to; there was no hesitation with him about it; he would "be sworn before God, as he hoped for mercy in Heaven," that he saw a man leave the house by the front way, who, turning quick round the corner of River Street, came bolt against him, and down they both went in the road, when the knife must have fallen from his pocket. Since when all had gone wrong with him. And it was "what he was told would happen, as no good ever came of such gifts. Yes, yes!" he would add, while the tears rolled down his cheeks; "no good come to me den, dat's true. Me got taken up, me did, and shut in de dark, and hissed and hooted at, like de wild beasts, for—oh, God!—killing de old lady and de young lady dat gib me food, and say 'what's your name, poor man?' and smile at me so sweet when she empty de victuals into me hat?—which was de great lie, it was, dat's

true ! Me kill de young lady dat was kind to Abel, and say ‘poor man,’ and ‘good night, Abel?’—me do dat ?” and contenting himself with indignantly shaking his woolly head, while his throat was too full to say more—if Abel, ‘the black,’ was acting the hypocrite, to deceive the captain and crew, oh, what a black hypocrite he was !

And it must be admitted that this was the light in which Abel was regarded by ninety-nine out of a hundred in Shiphampton. Except by the extreme philanthropic few, he was universally believed to be a monster of iniquity and pretence. Few had any doubt of his guilt ; and even those most inclined to adjudge him innocent, till he was proved to be otherwise, listened with perturbed brows to the fact of ‘no knife having been found,’ though every search had been made for it ; till they could not but grant that ‘it looked very bad.’ As also his alleged ‘collision with the man in the road ;’ no such person as he represented him to be having been seen by any one in Shiphampton, either before the murder or after it, in or about the town, or leaving it by railway or any other conveyance whatever.

But Abel heard nothing of the smothered storm he left behind him, and landed on his native shores seemingly with but one anxiety at heart, and that

was for 'the loss of his knife.' Nor could all the arguments of his wife and children, when, with tears, he told them of it, and the shocking trouble it had caused him, do more than make him think of it the oftener, and keep repeating "no, no—no more luck for Abel, now me lost me knife."

CHAPTER IV.

SEES MR. ANGELO LYONS IN POSSESSION OF HIS
RIGHTS, AND GREYSTONE HOUSE IN THE HANDS
OF THE RABBLE.

THE appalling news of the Greystone House tragedy had reached the West Indies before Abel arrived at Tobago ; and, as may be supposed, his acquittal was hailed with no little relief of mind by his friends. Still, it is no light matter to be remanded by the magistrates, from week to week, for more than a month, on a charge of murder ; and composedly as he encountered the curious eyes on him wherever he showed his face, when he first landed, Abel could not but be aware that he was a marked man, with the sort of unenviable mark, too, pointing him out wherever he went, which he would have gladly dispensed with if he could.

But though Abel was keenly alive to the fact that, although acquitted by their worships of Shiphamp-

ton, the magistracy of Tobago and its sister islands kept him continually in view, it is due to him to admit that he bore the surveillance to which it subjected him with exemplary grace; never betraying the slightest irritation under the many stings and bitternesses he must have felt, if innocent, but rather seeming to grin within himself at his own clear conscience, and only to be put out of temper by the inconsolable thought of the loss of his knife.

And it was these fits of vexation, when it was alluded to by any one, that kept up in people's minds a suspicion that "Abel had his own reasons for being so troubled about it." Many being of opinion that "what he feared most was—not that the knife was irretrievably lost, but whether it would ever be found?" Whether or no, Abel made no secret of his grief, and seemingly expected every one to sympathize with him. It gained him some steady adherents; but, truth to speak, even his warmest partisans deplored the unfortunate loss of the knife, and never seemed to like to dwell longer than they could help on that part of the story.

The 'house' of Balfour, Balfour and Son had been long known in the West Indies, not a British island of which but had, from the time of its first establishment in Shiphampton, largely contributed

to freight its ships and fill its coffers. It was essentially a West India 'house.' For though it disdained not to do business with the East, where it 'saw its way clear,' and had 'made a pretty penny at one time or another by its lucrative relations with Bengal and Calcutta,' its wealth, as a House, was drawn from the West. So that it may be conceived what a sensation was created there when came the dreadful intelligence of its terrible end. For now, as Mr. Leonard Balfour was dead, his Aunt Joyce was the last direct branch of the line, and the question was, "To whom would the business and bulk of their riches go, if, by a clause in old Roderick Balfour, the great-grandfather's will, the House and freeholds in Shiphampton, together with all the other freehold and copyhold and leasehold estates in Hampshire and Sussex, of which he died possessed, were so entailed, that, in the event of no lineal descendant lawfully claiming them, they should devolve to the Town Council of the ancient Borough of Shiphampton? "in grateful remembrance of what it had done for the Balfours—to be by them held, in trust, for such purpose or purposes as, in their discretion, or by a majority of votes, they might consider would best benefit the Borough, and also permanently redound to the credit of the donor?"

Who was the next lineal descendant, if any?

It was a question of deep interest to many, but to none more so than to Mr. Basil Horne, of Barbadoes. Not from any expectation of personal advantage; for though related to the Balfours by the marriage of his sister to a Shiphampton Boys, "the blood of the rival houses had never mingled," or, rather, the hostile hearts of the opulent Hornes and Balfours. But Basil Horne retained a fond recollection of his god-son Leonard, whose premature death had greatly shocked him; none the less because, by it, he was brought again into compulsory contact with his kinsman Angelo Lyons, of Trinidad, his next of kin, a man he never liked, but to shake off whom, now Leonard was gone, was much easier to talk about than to do. For Angelo Lyons had a wonderfully calm and persistent way of laying down and carrying out his plans, if so minded; and now that "poor Mr. Horne was such a sufferer, and was left so much alone, it behoved him, as his nearest relative, to make the remainder of his days as pleasant to him as he could."

And Angelo Lyons was having it pretty well his own way with his invalid kinsman, who feared him too much to oppose him, when, shortly after Angelo's return from a visit to Mrs. Ruth Lyons, in France,

the news reached them of the foul murder of Mrs. Joyce Balfour and her niece, of Shiphampton.

Ill as he was, Basil Horne sprang from his bed when he heard it, and fixing his terrified gaze on his kinsman Angelo, stood, with his lips apart and his tongue cleaving, paralysed, to the roof of his mouth, as if out of his senses.

Men show their horror at frightful tidings in different ways. Outward signs are little to go by. Some shed tears; while others, over even their children's and mothers' biers, are, with bursting hearts, as dry-eyed as if they felt nothing. Basil Horne, dumb-struck, stood staring at Angelo Lyons in speechless awe! but not a tear came, however full his heart was—whereas, Angelo hid his face in his hands, and, with choking breast, bore testimony to the 'generous emotions of a nature, as his admirers expressed it, which, cold and callous and calculating as those who little knew him called it, knew no luxury, where he felt he might indulge it, like thinking and feeling for others.'

It was a noble character to have. And still with his startled eyes rivetted on him, Basil Horne stood transfixed with the rush of conflicting thoughts that came over him, as he saw "the man of steel," as he called his unimpassioned kinsman, weeping;

while he himself, a mere creature of impulse by his side, could not have forced a tear down his cheeks, to have saved his life. And it affected Basil the more, for this reason—because the day before Angelo Lyons left him, after Leonard's death, to visit his sister in France, Basil mentioned to him how "his neighbour, Otto Ghrimes, had kept him in ignorance of his daughter Zoe's attachment for Mr. George Molineux, whereby his god-son Leonard could not have married her, if he would. Therefore that all his anger against Ann Balfour had ceased, and that, under the circumstances, he thought he was bound to do for her, in his will, the same as he would have done for Leonard." Which being the same thing, in effect, as saying to Angelo, "There is one who must still stand before you, please to understand that,"—it did seem so nobly disinterested of Angelo, thus to be grieved at a loss which would probably put into his pocket before long more than Forty Thousand pounds, that Basil Horne was conscious of the first thrill of interest he had ever felt for him, little as Angelo, absorbed in sorrow, seemed to know it.

And Basil Horne had more reasons than *that* for staring amazed at his lucky kinsman, who being, on his mother's side, "lineally related in some way to

great-grandfather Roderick Balfour, of blessed memory—what a wealthy man he had become all of a sudden by the shocking deaths that had occurred in the family, and “how meekly he took his great fortune!”

It literally stunned Basil Horne to think how “some were momentarily enriched in this world, with the least seeming hopes of it, while those, who, like himself, had been industriously plodding on all their lives for a competence, had hardly secured it before they were thrown on their backs, for others to enjoy the fruits of their labours. What a brilliant career was now open to Angelo Lyons! if he could prove his title to The Balfour Estates. And see how he began life, under Merrick Lincoln, without a penny! Now look at him!” and dumb struck by it, Basil stared—and Angelo wept—with no words to express their mutual emotion.

One’s rich relatives and one’s poor relatives are widely different persons—and Basil Horne began to feel a pride in his Trinidad kinsman that he had never felt before. He had always thought him eminently handsome; though, being of a florid complexion himself, he would have liked a little more blood in Angelo’s face, which was of marble paleness, and so severely classical that it always chilled Basil

to look at it, ordinarily featured as his own was, and bloatedly sensual. Basil Horne had always admired Angelo Lyons' Italian cast of features, and his tall, elegant, graceful figure, and polished air and address ; but had never till now noticed " what a superior mind he had to the generality of his West India acquaintances, and how he evidently was intended by nature to rule. It was stamped on his every gesture and movement. Clearly, he was born to be great. Greatness sat gracefully on him, as on one who deserved, and adorned it. His calmness had depth and strength in it, and his meekness was the type of a high mind. Power seemed accorded to him, rather than to be claimed, and, by the generous use he made of it for the good of others, to be Angelo Lyons's right. Evidently he was destined to exalt and ennoble his race ; and it was now the bounden duty, as it would be to the pleasure and profit of his friends, to promote to the utmost of their power the consummation of so laudable a result."

In short, independent as he deemed himself, Basil Horne was a bit of a parasite. And though his weeping kinsman's face was buried in his hands, with the grief into which the shocking news of the Greystone House murder had plunged him, no doubt

Angelo Lyons knew his man and how to interpret him. He well knew how it would have fared with him, at Basil's hands, had Leonard been living; and owed him small thanks for it, with his unquestionable priority of claim.

"But away with all that!" exclaimed Angelo to himself. "The irresistible course of events is working its own destined ends. What is to be, will be. Could I help it, if I would? What hand had I in my own making? Who or what stamped these eyes and this nose and mouth on this pale face of mine? and gave me black hair, instead of red, like my father's? Yes, and my mother's was flaxen, too. It was chance, was it? Whether or no, as it is, so it must stay, *black*. Am I pale—why? Am I passionate—why? Am I ambitious—why? Am I ugly—why? Am I beautiful—why? Am I clever—why? Am I a fool?—psshaw!—'a fool shall be known by his folly'—it was so said at his conception—*shall be*—poor fool!—he was made so—and *shall be* so—poor fool!—Yes, the irresistible course of events will work its own ends. But Basil Horne's influence will help to establish my title under Roderick Balfour's will. A means to the end. What was to be, will be. Which done—yes, yes—I shall know how to be grateful to him, and to the rest of them, who

—think of that—‘always predicated I should be a great man’—ha! ha!’

And here, as it would interest the reader very little to be dragged into a court of equity, as the Town Council of the ancient Borough of Shiphampton were, in self-defence, by Mr. Angelo. Lyons, suffice it to say that few Town Councils, with all but Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand pounds, sterling, in their hands, could have behaved more handsomely than did the Town Council of the ancient borough of Shiphampton, when Mr. Angelo and his advocates having got the day, they unhesitatingly relinquished all claim to the Balfour property in favour of that gentleman; on which he took possession accordingly. Nay, they shook hands, across the seas, about it in the most cordial way, and exchanged mutual compliments and congratulations exceedingly creditable to them both. It having “distressed the one quite as much as the other, that there should have arisen a dissentient opinion between them; in either case solely induced by one motive—the anxious desire for the equitable settlement of a question at law which could in no other way be finally arrived at with satisfaction to all.”

How nice! when such great questions at issue, involving the right, or otherwise, to Two Hundred

and Fifty thousand pounds, are adjusted thus easily. Well Angelo Lyons, "man of steel," as Basil Horne called him—might warm towards the Town Council, and the Town Council towards him. And how still more gratifying it was when it transpired, that, "as soon as Mr. Angelo Lyons could quit Trinidad, he intended to fix his residence in Shiphampton; until when, the business of Balfour and Co. would be conducted, as usual, by competent hands."

The which giving the good folks of the ancient borough something else to talk about, the murder of poor Aunt Joyce and herniece was dropped by degrees—the rabble having exhausted their ire long ago on the last pane of undemolished glass within stone's reach of Greystone House, back and front. In sober truth, it presented a pitiable spectacle. So lately the fairest and most flourishing house in the town—now look at it! What an end for the great House of Balfour, Balfour and Co. to come to! Who could say what might happen in this life? Oh, what a desolate look it had! what a ghastly tale it told! Who would ever live in it again, with those indelible blood-stains in it which could never be washed out? The stone walls were too strong to be battered down, so they stood; but who that had looked up at them, with pride, six months back, could have recognized

them now ? Of *grey*-stone were they, glittering in the sun like diamonds ? True, here and there might be discerned faint traces of the old face, but so bedaubed and mauled with mud and dirt and great black smears and patches—as if some one had purposely scaled from window to window, and, when no further havoc could be done, thus wrecked his farewell vengeance on it—as scarcely to be visible. Thenceforth it should be called *Blackstone* House, not *grey*. And so it was by the crowds that came to see and pelt it. Till the work of demolition done, they passed it by, as they would a felon hung in chains—who, having had his deserts, might now be left to tell his own ghastly tale to the winds, and point his own ghastly moral.

Of course Mr. Angelo Lyons was made acquainted by his agents with the deplorable condition to which Greystone House had been reduced by the mob ; but judged it best to let it remain as it was till the popular fury had in a measure subsided. “By when he should in all probability have settled his affairs in the West Indies, with the view of making Shiphampton his home ; and then he would have the house put in order again, when he could personally attend to it as he wished.”

And he decided wisely in leaving it to time to

gradually erase from memory the first furious rage of the rabble, when 'the black,' Abel White, the murderer, as they believed him to be, escaped as he did. Then their vengeance knew no bounds, and they madly vented it as they could. The "accursed house," as they called it, should be rased to the ground; "for out of its riches how much had ever gone to the poor? Ask John Strong, the tax-gatherer." And on went the demolition; till the law forcibly taking possession of the walls and what was inside them—"what was done was done, and it would be time enough to think of repairing it, if ever, when the right owner came."

"It's my hopinion," quoth John Strong to Mr. Gribble, the Borough solicitor of Ship Street, "my firm hopinion, Mr. Gribble——"

"Hem—what, John?"

"That he did it, as sure as you're born, sir."

"Hem — 'the black' ? Yes, dreadful-looking fellow, wasn't he?"

"The hawfullest face, Mr. Gribble, I hever saw in my life ! It turns me stone cold to think of it. Think of his using his knife that he'd just been cutting the victuals with they gave him at the house, for *that* !"

Mr. Gribble shuddered.

"In all your hexperience of criminals, Mr. Gribble"—and John Strong turned as pale as a ghost—"did you hever hear the like of *that* by a human creature?"

"Horrid! horrid! John."

"To cut off an ear of heach of 'em—the right ear of the one, and the left ear of the hother—there's a brute! And what for?"

"Yes," said Mr. Gribble, meditatively—"what for? That's the blackest part of it, John. It wasn't plunder they wanted, or why not have taken the purse-full of notes and gold in Mrs. Ann Balfour's pocket? Hem—brutal—savage—atrocious, inexplicable act that—cutting the ears off—inexplicable!"

"Unless," rejoined John, with livid lips, "it's what Doctor Bruce says they do—them negro devils in the West Hindies—cuts the ears hoff of their victims and carries them away with them not to be haunted by their spectres. There's a hact!"

Mr. Gribble started!

"Yes," went on John, with flashing eyes, "it's their belief—the belief of them black devils that does such deeds—that, if they've the ears of their murdered victims, they'll never be haunted by 'em. There's hanimals!"

It plunged Mr. Gribble into deeper meditation than ever; while the tax-gatherer explained to him that "it was quite true what Doctor Bruce said, for he shewed it him in print; and how them negro-friends thought no more of spilling blood, or poisoning, than heating their dinners. And don't that show," added Mr. John, "where that blood came from on his clothes? And there he is, at large, the miscreant! to laugh at us. It's hawful!"

"Abel White, you mean, John?"

"White!" hissed Mr. John, with clenched teeth. "A blacker monster never walked the hearth! But 'they'll have him yet,' as Doctor Bruce says. 'He'll cut a ear hoff too many one of these days;' and John Strong chuckled at the thought of "how the majesty of the law would be vindicated then."

In truth, from all he could judge, Mr. Gribble, the Borough Attorney, had mercifully leaned rather to the belief of Abel White's innocence than his guilt. Jonathan Gribble "went by the evidence;" he "had nothing to do with the town's talk." At all events, though appearances were so ugly against Abel, he would "give him credit for what was in his favour;" and saw him shipped off for the far West, "nothing doubting but that, whether guilty or not, the magistrates had done their duty in

acquitting him, and that the unerring Eye of Eyes and Law of Laws would prevail in the end." But Mr. Gribble had not then heard of this 'negro-murderer's superstitious belief in the purloined ears of his victims to save him from being haunted by their spectres ;' and so entirely did it turn the tables, with him, against Abel, that coupling it with the lost knife and blood-stained clothes, so steadily stuck to by the police, not even Sergeant A, No. 1, nor Doctor Bruce, nor Mr. Collector Strong, were more satisfied of his guilt than himself.

Poor butchered ladies! peace to their shades! Or if that might not be, till their blood was avenged, O what an Eye to have always on you, guilt-haunted murderer! O what a voice to have always terrifically ringing in your ears—the ceaseless spectres of your victims ever crossing your path and dolefully bidding you prepare for your doom!

CHAPTER V.

SHEWS HOW THE 'MAN OF STEEL' RULED HIS
PEOPLE, AND REIGNED IN THEIR HEARTS.

THERE were grand doings at Trinidad where flourished Mr. Angelo Lyons' estates, to celebrate with befitting joy his succession to the enormous wealth of the Balfours. For though called a "man of steel" by his kinsman Basil Horne, Angelo Lyons was much loved in the island. He was a native of it, which considerably conduced to his popularity. His father had owned property in Tobago; but being of a cruel tyrannical temper, was hated by his people and compelled to part with it to save his life. Angelo, his son, was then old enough to see the rock on which his father split, and taking warning by his example, so profited by it, on joining Mr. Merrie Lincoln, in partnership, at Trinidad, that though they failed shortly afterwards, in consequence, it was said, of several successive bad crop-times, and

Mr. Lincoln's affairs, on his accession to the estate, being involved, Angelo Lyons had rooted himself so firmly in the hearts of the negroes, that he soon re-established himself in the island under better auspices than ever, till he became one of its most prosperous planters.

His iron-rule—which obtained him the name of the “man of steel” from Basil Horne—was so cleverly tempered with the requisite amount of compassion and mercy, that, while other masters failed for want of the due equilibrium with which to wield their authority, the whip in Massa Lyons' hands was as nothing, to correct “bad manners,” compared with the control he had over the insubordinate by the well-timed exercise of those little grants in their favour, and ready concessions, which more than any thing attach the West India negroes to the persons of their masters. And it was only when these concessions and clemencies were abused that ‘Massa Lyons’ was “a man of steel;” and then woe-betide the incorrigibles who came under his wrath.

Angelo Lyons knew very well that “kindness was the only way to make good negroes;” but he also knew that, with all the kindnesses shown them, cases of poisoning, and stabbing, and cracked skulls, and thieving, and *pull-footing*, and lazy profligacy unpar-

donable, were of such constant occurrence, that, to be loved, he must be feared by those who recognized little other definition of "Massa's goodness" than what good things for themselves, by it, they could contrive to get out of him. In short, negroes were grossly selfish. Not but that there were to be found true and fond and faithful hearts under black skins, and *mulattos*', and *sambos*', and *quadroons*', and *mustees*', as well as white ones. Still, the negroes were essentially selfish; added to which, they were obstinately superstitious; and it was by well studying their characters and ruling them in accordance therewith, that had given 'Massa Lyons' such influence over them, which, with all his care and tenderness, his partner old Mr. Merric Lincoln could never acquire over them.

Of course it bore its own fruits; so that when came the glad tidings from Shiphampton of "what a rich man their Massa was," if Angelo Lyons was popular before then with his people, now he was a god, to fall down to and worship! and worship him they did in a way that for a week made the whole island ring with the din of it.

Negroes have a strange way, to eyes and ears unaccustomed to them, of expressing their joy. It is excessive rapture with them from the first hour of

the festival to the last. Half measures, whether in joy or sorrow, are unknown to them; they literally revel in excess when let loose; and on this occasion of 'Massa Lyons,' becoming 'so grand man!' certainly there were many excuses to be made, if they somewhat exceeded themselves. Once set going, who could stop them? Least of all had 'Massa' himself any wish to do so; and it wants the pencil of a Hogarth to give an idea of the Babel.

The noise was deafening, loudness being an indispensable ingredient in negro mirth; while the shouting, and wild laughter, and sudden burst of outlandish singing, and dancing, looked so like the genuine thing, that well the "good, kind Massa" might look on his happy people with smiling eyes; except when tears filled them at the saddening thought of "how soon his imperative duties elsewhere would compel him to leave them."

Urged by the exciting announcement of which, what despotic monarch was ever idolized by his people like Massa Lyons? It was so droll to see the various affecting instances of devotion on the part of his subjects, whose sundry little devices to gain his good word, or get something out of him, were very amusing. Mothers fantastically be-cloaked and be-turbaned in gaudiest colours, and whimsically decked

out with all sorts of beads and corals and glittering ornaments, brought their naked little children to him, and gleefully holding them up—after the fashion Matthew Gregory Lewis, Esq., M.P. tells us the slave-mothers did to him on his Jamaica estates,—presented Massa Lyons with his “nice little lilly negers,” declaring, “now they had lived to see their Massa so rich grand man! they were ready to die that moment—them no care.”

Nor were the men less profuse in their protestations of undying attachment. But one “had no smart-enough coat in which to do Massa’s farewell festival fitting credit;” and another was in tears almost, because “his best jacket was so faded, he was ashamed of it;” and another, whose “wife was ill in hospital, didn’t know what to do for a new piece of printed cotton to make Cæsar and Phillis a frock a-piece;” and another’s “only iron-pot was past mending, with a shocking bad hole in it, and if him couldn’t get another—God-A’mity! God-A’mity! tink of dat!”

The consciousness of the power to please—what equals it for making happy, when and where it accords with the will to do so? It was Mr. Angelo Lyons’ anxious desire to leave Trinidad firmly fixed in the hearts of his people; and, “man of steel” as he was,

to have judged by his looks as he went from one to the other of them, dispensing joy and gladness wherever he showed his face—barring the anxious thought of leaving them—there was apparently no happier heart in the island than his own. It must have cost him a pretty penny to fill them all to surfeit as he did ; so that when came the morning on which he had to bid them good bye, and he cried out with a loud voice from the carriage that was to bear him away :—

“ What more can I do for you ? ”

“ Nothing ! nothing ! ” they shouted, with upheld hands and choking throats—while one gigantic quadron man pressed forwards to kiss his feet again, and clasp his knees—“ nothing, but Massa come back soon, or we no care to live, we don’t.”

“ Yes, yes, I will come back to you,” he promised, “ And till I do, show me how much you love me, show me, I mean, that you love me as much as I do you, by obeying the laws I have laid down for you, for your happiness, while I am away, just the same as if I were with you. I shall be with you in thought always. Our interests are identical. If I prosper, so will you—if you suffer, so shall I. Are we not brothers and sisters all of us. What other Creator have I than yours ? Do you love me

as I do you? Then let me see, when I return to you, which has loved me most. It shall not go unrewarded. My *slaves*! Nay, say not so—say, rather, my negroes, my friends and helpers, my Christian brothers and sisters, my faithful own.”

“Yes! yes!” with louder and louder cries of joy and grief commingled, with accompanying characteristic gestures and gesticulations of delight and agony indescribable, as he drove away; “yes! yes!” they shouted, “you no our massa—you our father, mother, husband, wife, brother, sister—God-A’mity! tink of dat!”

The carriage moved on amidst an uproar that no pen can depict; but still Samson, the quadroon giant slave, clung to it, as if for yet another farewell word from his master before he could tear himself from him.

“Tink of dat!” said one to the other, with flashing eyes; “and him Samson got all dem iron pots and kettles in de house; and him uncle Hercules, dat’s away—dere’s a free neger for you, if he’s living! God-A’mity! what’s it Samson wants now?”

Seemingly Mr. Lyons knew, by the something he transferred from his pocket into Samson’s hand; but if so, it by no means loosened the quadroon’s hold, but rather appeared to tighten it, much to everyone’s amazement.

Mr. Lyons smiled.

"Down ! down !" called one after the other "Oh, you bad-mannered neger!—shame! Samson, shame!"

But Samson held on.

"Tink of dat !—and him uncle Hercules, if he's alive, free man. God-A'mity ! and Massa's head aching all the time so ! See him pale face—God-A'mity !"

It was, indeed, aching acutely. But uncle Hercules was a grand favourite of Massa's ; and, so, taking courage, his nephew Samson, heedless of all else, relied on his 'friend at court' for the little parting favour he had to ask for himself, while yet he had the chance for it.

"Oh, Massa ! good, kind Massa !" sobbed Samson, with imploring looks ; "me your slave all me life ; me no be free if me could ; me be eber slave to Massa. Me no want to be like him uncle Hercules, if Massa say Samson be head-carpenter when Hercules die. Dat's all dat Samson want. Den him rather be slave to Massa dan de King—if Hercules dead."

A sudden thought seemed to strike Mr. Lyons, as he smilingly listened to what was said to him ; and calling to Mr. Mungo, his overseer, he asked him a question or two in an undertone about Sam-

son. Having apparently received satisfactory answers to which :—

“Very well,” he said to Samson; “in the event of a vacancy occurring, you shall fill Hercules’ place, if your conduct deserve it. But I hope your uncle is alive, and may return and live many years yet; and I am sure you hope so, too; for he was a good workman.”

“Oh, yes, Massa! yes, yes! me love Hercules. Him kind, good uncle! Me no want Hercules dead. Him no die for Samson, no, no! Most like, him alive still, hey! hey!”

“See to it,” said Mr Lyons to the overseer; and off—Samson ran back to his friends, wild with joy! and laughing and dancing and rolling and tumbling about like a madman, at the thought of “them bad-mannered negers, that cry ‘shame, Samson, shame! down! down!’ when him was taking leave of him Massa so gentleman!”

And then commenced in good earnest the three days’ holydays that were to follow. Massa was gone; but he had given them three whole days more to mourn his loss in; and thoroughly they meant to do it as soon as his back was turned.

“Me no care to live when Massa is away,” they told him; and it seemed so by the way they set

about it. No sooner was his carriage out of sight than, drying their eyes, away they went to the games, singing the old Jamaica song—

‘ Hey—ho ! negers, me no care a button !
Me got plenty now, since Massa come ;
When Massa go, me no care a dammee
For how them use we—hey—ho—day !’

Nor did they seemingly, while the rum and revels lasted ; notwithstanding it was Mr. Mungo, the overseer’s, gratifying duty to report to Mr. Lyons the pleasing fact of not one case of drunkenness having occurred during the festival. “ A proof,” he truly added, “ of how falsely those spoke of the West India negroes who said they were debased creatures, void of all moral restraints, who would wallow in excess if they could.”

Mr. Angelo Lyons might well be proud of it ! for surely there was some credit due to himself, as their master ? Nor did even his captious kinsman, Basil Horne—now he was so rich—fail to let them know at Shiphampton, long before Mr. Lyons went there to take possession of his princely fortune, “ what an irreparable loss Trinidad had sustained by his leaving them, and how universally beloved he was by all classes.”

And thus proudly heralded at every step, Angelo

Lyons took leave of his native land. Firm in possession of what was "far dearer to him," he told his sorrowing friends, as he bade them farewell, "than all his wealth—the sanction and good will of his fellow men, not only of Trinidad, but of every other British West India island where the name of Lyons was known."

CHAPTER VI.

TELLS HOW MARY AND HESTER WERE SHOWN OVER
THE NEW HOUSE AND INTO THE 'OLD STORE-
ROOM,' BY FAITH LINCOLN, AND HOW IT AFFECTED
THEM.

'THE Queen' mail-packet from Calais had landed her passengers at Dover; towards the close of the day following which a tall, handsome, dark-visaged, gentlemanly-looking man, of about thirty-five, seemingly, and hand in hand with a lovely young girl at his side, walked gravely up the High Street of Shiphampton, till he reached River Street, where he stopped, as if undecided whether to turn back or go on. He was within a hundred yards of Greystone House, the scene of the late horrible Broadway murder; but it appearing doubtful to a butcher's boy, passing, whether he was aware of it—

"That's the house where the murder was," said the boy, pointing to it, as though he made sure it was what the stranger was looking for; "where the two

ladies was killed by 'the black,' who cut off their ears, but never robbed 'em of not a farthing."

"Indeed!" answered Mr. Lyons, turning his eyes in the direction indicated. "Thank you," with a shilling—as the boy shouldered his tray to be off; and tightening the grasp of his daughter's hand, he crossed the road, and presently stood with her opposite the house, gazing on it.

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed his lovely child, shudderingly looking at the desolate aspect it presented, "is that Greystone House?"

"Yes."

And young as she was, Rachel Lyons shewed by the deadly paleness that robbed her fair cheeks of the rosy glow in them the moment before, what an impression that first face-to-face acquaintance with her future home had on her. She drew closer to her father, as her eyes measured the misery of the place from top to bottom; and though he spoke to her more than once, to divert her thoughts, may be, from what he saw had taken every drop of blood from her face, she answered him only with open lips, and as if she scarcely heard what he said to her, or cared to think of anything just then but of "poor Aunt Joyce," as she was called in the family, and "poor Ann Balfour!"

The feeling was natural enough, even for a girl of her tender age—Rachel being then but twelve years old—and perceiving it, her father stood still, as if, “man of steel” as he was, he loved her the better for its exhibition. For though his face had less visible blood in it than hers, his eyes glowed with parental pride and delight as he watched her beautiful upturned gaze, and felt her grasp of his hand tighten with the feeling of child-like dependence on him for love and protection which the sad sight they had come to see was so calculated to inspire in her. It evidently pleased Mr. Lyons. Nor till she herself took her eyes off the house, and seemed to wish to draw him away from it, did he break in on her musings, so absorbed was he, apparently, with the contemplation of her loveliness, and of the priceless treasure he had in it, as her father.

Yes, Mr. Lyons had determined to make Grey-stone House his home. It was a strange choice. But, truly, Angelo Lyons was a ‘man of steel’ in some things; and his taking his lovely child to such a dismal spectacle as their intended home then presented, proved it. Few fathers—even though similarly resolved to be above popular prejudices and act only in conformity with their own judgment—would have done it. But Mr. Lyons was no ordinary mor-

tal; and in choosing to present his daughter to her future home in its then wretched state, doubtless he had his motives for so doing, and perhaps sufficient ones. Possibly he desired to see the effect it would have on her, before finally giving the order for the restoration of the house for their occupation. Rachel was a girl of deep feeling, and it might be that he wished to observe] how the sight of it affected her, and himself, too, hand in hand with her, ere he gave the word of command to the workmen. He saw she turned deadly pale, he felt her grasp of his hand tighten as she gazed in speechless terror at the smashed windows and blackened walls of the house she was going to live in, and the shudder it occasioned sent a cold thrill through him also. But she spoke not; no word escaped her lips to induce her father to alter his purpose; wherefore he returned to his hotel to set about the necessary preliminaries with his lawyer and the builders and upholsterers for the preparation of Greystone House for their reception with as little delay as possible.

But though Rachel yielded implicit obedience to her father's rule in everything, Angelo Lyons loved his child too well not to notice the thoughtful looks with which she listened to such remarks as he addressed to her attendant, Faith Lincoln, about the

house, and how he meant to "cleanse it from the foul stains on it by a far better way than foolishly battering it to pieces." In truth, the poor girl was so shocked at the idea of its being her home, in any shape, that she was dumbstruck, and received her father's good-night kiss, when in bed, as if stupefied by something that paralysed her. She followed him with her beautiful large blue eyes till he left the room, after fondly kissing her now burning cheek—burning with the hope she had that "Faith would sit down by her bed-side, when her father was gone, and talk to her till she fell asleep."

"Faith!" she called, as soon as the door was closed; "come here."

"In a moment, Miss;" and then when she had done what she was about, Faith sat down in the great easy-chair at the bed-head, and reclining back on the soft cushions, was falling off into a doze, when—

"Faith," again from Miss Rachel rousing her from her reverie:—

"Yes, here I am," she answered, leaning over the pillow. "Did you think I was gone? No, no! But you must close those eyes now, and have a nice long night's rest, for you have scarcely slept at all since we left France; nor have I."

"I don't want to sleep, Faith."

"Why not, Miss Rachel?"

"Oh, Faith! what a dreadful house that is we are going to live in!"

"Wicked, wanton folly, yes! of those idle, bad, mischievous boys, to treat it so; and there was not such another charming house in the town as Greystone House, till the rabble got hold of it. Where were the police I wonder? Scandalous! But your papa will soon put it to rights. Then it will be very different. Yes, yes, we shall all like it well enough then. Greystone House the only house in Shiphampton in which bad deeds have been done? Cruel conduct! Smash to atoms the windows of any house, and pelt it with mud—enough to make it ugly."

"It was ugly enough, was it not, Faith, without that?"

"Ugly, Miss? Oh, no! I always thought it so handsome! And so will you when your papa has put it in order. But best go to sleep now, and we'll talk more about it to-morrow. It's not the house that is to blame, no, no."

Compelled to be satisfied with which, Rachel lay awake; while Faith, to avoid further talking, dozed off again in her elbow-chair. Till lulled into forget-

fulness, the weary lids closed on those beautiful blue eyes ; and to have judged by the placid smiles playing round that sweet mouth, when Faith looked to see if she were asleep, Rachel's young dreams must have been happy.

Perhaps she dreamt of her mother. For Rachel Lyons was old enough, when her mother died, to know what a tender loving mother to her she was, and what a sweet, kind, gentle, smiling face she had, and how, the day before they told her that 'angels had taken her with them up to heaven,' she lay on her bosom with her arms round her mother's neck, till she fell asleep, never to see her in life again. It was all stamped as firmly on her memory as the recollection of the black clothes she and her father wore on the dismal day of the burial, when they and the servants had all the house to themselves. Oh ! could she ever forget that day ? But she could think of it differently now to what she did then ; and almost always before she fell asleep, she would ask Faith to sit by her bed side and talk with her about "those happy days at Trinidad when her darling mamma was alive, and her papa was so gay and cheerful, and he never looked sad and unhappy as he often did now. Why was he so sad and unhappy, if darling mamma was taken by the angels to heaven ? How

happy *she* was ! Then ought not they to be happy, too ?”

What answer but one could Faith make her ? And so they talked on ; till hushed in sleep, Faith would heave a sigh as she looked at her beautiful face and pale golden hair and long silken eyelashes, the image of her mother's. But what those sighs portended, whether impending good or evil for her lovely young charge, or joy or sorrow for herself, was known to none but Faith ; and it was no part of Faith Lincoln's character to needlessly betray what she felt, where it seemed to her inexpedient to do so.

But Miss Rachel had seemingly forgotten all about “poor dear darling mamma” on this first night of their arrival in Shiphampton ; for she never once mentioned her name while talking with Faith of Greystone House, and “how ugly it was,” and “how sad it made her to think they were going to live there.” Evidently what she had seen of it, externally, with her father, had made a deep impression on her ; and none the less a disagreeable one because, like her sweet amiable, uncomplaining mother, she meekly yielded to the judgment and guidance of those whose authority she looked up to, and whose

wishes she was bound to consider in preference to her own.

Rachel Lyons was but twelve years old ; but there is a deal of difference in the minds of children of the same age ; and Mr. Lyons, fatalist and free-thinker as he was, would sit and gaze on her beautiful beaming face—beaming with an intelligence beyond her years,—and be sensible of a thrill of paternal pride and joy at the thought of “ what an exquisite bud of promise it was in his hands, to bring to maturity,” that told its own tale far better than all his cold carelessness as to what might be the form, or quality, or fate of the “ vessel,” as he termed it, “ which, when made by the potter, had no right to say, why hast thou formed me thus ?”

The thought of Greystone House for her home troubled Rachel, and she fell asleep thinking of it. Yet, her dreams must have been happy, to judge by the sweet smiles they produced. Let us conclude it was about her darling mamma she was dreaming ; than when she was never more interestingly lovely, as looked at by Faith that night, with her faultless up-turned cheek slightly flushed, and her lips apart, and every feature of her beautiful face hushed in that perfect repose which poets and painters depict as the sleep of the angels.

And let me now give a faint sketch of our little heroine in the interesting position we see her in—as interesting as well could be.

Need a face be strictly beautiful to be angelic? need it be artistically perfect to simultaneously charm the eye and heart? Oh, no! It may be faultless in every feature, yet wanting in expression; it may fill the beholder with admiration and delight, and, yet, be irregular and defective. The outline of Rachel's face, like her father's, was Italian; but nature seemed to have admired her mother's English beaming blue eyes, and pale golden hair, and fair complexion, and dimpled cheek, and artless, happy mouth too much, to overlook them in her moulding. Evidently it was her intention to form Rachel rather after the model of her mother than her father. He was eminently handsome, as handsome, for an Italian cast of face, as it was possible for a man to be; but though his lustrous eyes were burning bright, they lacked that genial light and warmth of the sweet, meek, patient, gentle, guileless Ursula's, which when they smiled on you, bespoke a heart, if you deserved it, that was all love and truthfulness and goodness, and which you could not trust too much. But there was that in Angelo Lyons' most gracious moods which chilled rather than warmed, and, notwithstand-

ing his singularly prepossessing looks and manners, when he desired to be agreeable, left the impression that feeling was not natural to him, nor sympathy, nor pity, any further than their convenient exhibition might serve his own subtle ends.

But you saw her father in Rachel, as well as her mother ; the outline of her face was his, though the general expression was her mother's. Indeed there were times when she looked so like him—if firmly purposed to have her own way—that then Angelo Lyons would stare at her with an incredulous smile, as if half doubting the evidence of his senses, and as though, when thus reflecting him, he was not quite sure he admired her as much as when she resembled him least. For then her angelic mother was before him, who fondly loved him, and clung to him to the last—utter alien as he was to her in christian creed and conduct, and sternly treating her as he often did, if rumour belied him not. That he loved his wife as well as he could love any one, no one denied ; but that he had greatly embittered her short married life by his ungodly tenets, and “constrained the angels,” as they said in Tobago, her native place, “to take her away from him to Heaven before he broke her heart,” every one, who knew her, believed. Her death was the first sensible blow he had ever re-

ceived ; and his friends hoped it would “reclaim him from his sceptical ways ; and now the entire care and culture of his daughter devolved on him, arouse him to the necessity of abandoning his fatal free-thinking principles for his child’s sake, if not for his own.”

It aroused Angelo Lyons to the keener knowledge of what—to use his own words—he had “always, from the first moment he could reason, thought so strange, with regard to man’s mortality, viz. why the good, as they were called, in this life, should almost universally be the first to be taken out of it, standing so in need of good examples as the world did ? Were there not angels enough in Heaven, without adding Ursula Lyons to them ; when every one said ‘her christian efforts in his behalf, as his wife, were the only means that would ever save him from destruction.’ If so, how contradictory, how cruel it seemed ! to take her away from him ?”

“Not so, dear papa,” would Rachel, with throat-full, say to him, as she twined her arms round his neck when thus he talked of her mother. “It may be, may it not, that darling mamma was taken by the angels to Heaven, to be able to be always watching over us—a real angel—both in Heaven and on earth—there and here also—always taking care of us and

praying for us? And how do we know, papa dear, but that it was the only way to get *us* also to Heaven with her—never to part again—when God takes us, too?”

Which drawing his lips to her fair cheek, as she lay her head on his shoulder, there Angelo Lyons would let her lie, without another word; till she either fell asleep on his neck, or, if too full of her mother's image to close her eyes till she had done prattling to him—in the sure belief that he fervently felt the truth of what she said to him as much as she did.

It was indeed a precious “bud of promise,” as Angelo Lyons proudly termed it, that—now its entire care and culture devolved on him, her father, to bring to maturity—he called his own. How lovely she was! The thought of it might well thrill him. Where looked he on her equal? Take her where he would, all eyes were on her, all tongues busy with her praises. “What a beautiful creature!” greeted him at every turn, “what a heavenly face! how gentle! how guileless she is! how graceful! what a sweet composure in her every gesture and movement! how entirely natural she is! how artless! what a right mind she has! how proud her father must be of her!”

And so he was, little as it pleased him to show it. It pleased Angelo Lyons rather to listen than to talk, which perhaps was one reason why he had the command over himself that he had. He saw what an enemy a facile tongue is in a fool's mouth ; and so used his ears and understanding, that, if they deceived him sometimes, he could keep the immaterial occurrence to himself. It gave him a character for anything but amiability ; but as that was a word that always made his lip curl, any little shafts aimed at him from those quarters, fell harmless ; and it is astonishing how popular his seeming acquiescence in the superior wisdom of his well-wishers soon made him in Shiphampton and about. The well-wishers left him with so good an opinion of themselves, that there was nothing too good they could say of him ; so that before he had been enrolled a free citizen of the old Borough six months—though none could be said to quite agree with him, no man had more enthusiastic friends than had Angelo Lyons.

Rachel, too, was “such a favourite everywhere !” She would have made any father famous. Especially one who, left a widower as Mr. Lyons was, was “himself so very handsome, and young, and rich, and, possibly, would be wanting another maternal bosom for that sweet orphan girl of his, when the

proper period for mourning had expired." The which seemed all the more likely, the gossips whispered to each other, "because of the increasing solicitude Mr. Lyons naturally felt, as Rachel grew up, to insure her the constant companionship of a mind more congenial with hers than his was, absorbed as it was continually, when not engaged in business, in those long fits of abstraction which sometimes left her for days together with no one to open her heart to but Faith Lincoln.

But time went on, and seemingly Mr. Lyons had seen no spinster, old or young, in Shiphampton or elsewhere, to supply the place of the exemplary wife he had lost. And now Rachel was in her fourteenth year, and more than ever stood in need of a mother's love. It puzzled the gossips exceedingly. They were at their wit's end to account for it. "What a charming residence he had made Greystone House! Who would recognize it now, as the once plain, square, unpretending business-house of the Balfours? What a transformation! It was no longer a house—it was a mansion! a palace! fit for a prince to live in!"

Yea, the builders had done their work well, and so had the decorators and upholsterers. And could but the red stains in the flag-stones below have been

washed out,—for Mr. Lyons would not have them removed,—not even old Molly herself would have “hardly known where she was,” when Faith took her over it from top to bottom—“such a fresh face had been put on everything, as if such a thing as a sinful thought even could never have found entrance there.”

Nor was Hester less struck with the “wonderful difference!” as she called it, than Molly. But her greatest surprise was—that “Mr. Lyons had not replaced those dreadful stained stones with pure new ones. They spoilt it all. Who could think of anything else, while they were there? Keep your eyes off them if you could. How strange to let *them* stay!”

“It does seem so, don’t it?” assented Faith Lincoln, spreading refreshments before her guests. “It would strike most persons so. It did me. But Mr. Lyons thinks differently. He is peculiar on some points. He says he has no wish to do away, if he could, with the recollection of the melancholy event that brought him to live here. On the contrary, he wishes to be sometimes reminded of it. Why not? Such lessons are not without their uses. He has other ways, in abundance, wherein to find forgetfulness of what he is—what we all are—rich or poor.

The stones, he says, cannot rise up in judgment against him, or his. So, why fear them? Is Greystone House the only house, happily inhabited, in which dark deeds have been done? What old house but must be pulled down, if you must have no stain on it?"

Hester shuddered.

"I must own," continued Faith, "I should have had other stones there myself; though, now there is a cocoa-matting over them, time will accustom us to that, like everything else. Mr. Lyons would not have covered them. He saw no need for it. 'What he has added to the house, to please Miss Lyons, he has added,' he says; 'but he has taken nothing from it—not a brick, nor stick, nor stone.' He has a mind superior to that."

It silenced Hester. But she told Molly when they got out again in the open air and breathed freely, that, "spite of what the housekeeper had said about 'no need to fear, if you'd no cause,' she wouldn't live in Greystone House—with those dreadful blood-stains to pass night and day at all hours—no, not if she were as guiltless as a new-born babe, and she might have it filled from the cellars to the garrets with golden guineas."

It is noteworthy, how having views superior to

vulgar prejudices exalts its owners in the wondering estimation of those who least agree with them. There is power in peculiarity. It was universally admitted in Shiphampton that "clearly their new borough councillor, Mr. Angelo Lyons, of Greystone House, and Trinidad, West Indies, was a man of a very superior mind." Few professed to understand his peculiar opinions, fewer to admire them, and not one perhaps to think and act in concert; but all allowed the "extraordinary superiority of his mind," and humbly bowed to it, in consequence.

What exquisite judgment, too, he had displayed in the fresh fashioning and fitting-up of his house.

"What taste! What elegance! How sumptuous throughout; and, yet, how chaste! More than money was wanting to produce an effect like that!" It was "faultless!" It was the "surpassing work of great genius!"

Truly, it would have amazed poor Aunt Joyce if she could have looked out of her grave and beheld what the time-honoured 'old house' was capable of, in improving hands. Not a nook nor corner of it but had undergone such a thorough re-modelling and re-embellishment, as would have greatly startled her antiquated notions, and perhaps sent her back to her rest, well contented that it had never hap-

pened in her day to witness anything so un-Balfour-like—so irregular!

What was so lately little more than a narrow passage from the street door to the rear of the house, was now a wide, handsome hall, paved with black and white marble, and embellished from the floor to the ceiling with choice paintings, and marble busts, and statuettes from Italy, and old armour. There were four richly carved oak chairs, too, with the Lyons' crest on them, *a clubbed giant, with his foot on his enemy's neck*, and their quaint motto under it, *Fiat*. And over the carved oak table, to match, was hung a plain small mahogany box, with a slit in the top of it, there specially placed by her father, to please Miss Rachel, who brought it with her from France, where she used to gather together more francs and half-francs and centimes for her poor pensioners, of one sort or another, than ever they got, poor souls! after she took it down from its nail at Pau, and, with tears in her eyes, packed it up in her pretty red leather trunk. It not a little reconciled Rachel to her new abode, when the first object that smilingly met her gaze, on entering it, was her "dear old poor-box," as if to welcome her; "where it would be all her own again," Faith said, "to do as she liked with, and fill, and empty, and re-fill, as fast

as she could at Shiphampton, as well as elsewhere."

It was a good thought of Faith's, and highly commended by Mr. Lyons.

And what had become of Aunt Joyce's snug, comfortable front parlour, looking on to the Broadway, the same in which she and her niece Ann Balfour were sitting by the blazing fire that bitter cold afternoon when Abel, 'the black,' drew them to the window with his doleful ditties?

Well Molly might stare! and Hester want words, to express her surprise! Oh, what a metamorphosis! It used to be called 'the snuggest room in the house.' Now look! Though there was a dining-room double the size, behind, and a back-parlour opposite it, on the other side of the passage, and a beautiful large drawing-room, too, and the little side room that Miss Boys, before she was married, used to work in and keep her canaries and goldfinches, neither Uncle Tristram nor Aunt Joyce ever lived in any other room but that. "Mercy! if they could see it now!"

It would have amazed them no doubt. Where the old cheerful bay-window used to be, from which you got such a nice uninterrupted view, on the right, over the corn-market, and, on the left, across the

sheep and pig pens, almost as far as the river, were now two stately plate glass sashes in polished mahogany frames, that made Hester involuntarily step back, on entering the room, and hold her breath, while clutching Molly by the arm,—“it seems so unnatural,” she said to her in a whisper, “for us to be standing here, to be stared at by the people outside in that rude way. Law! it’s like living, as you might say, out of doors, to have windows like them. It turns me cold to think of it.”

But Molly was thinking most of those beautiful old drab moreen window-curtains, with ball-tasselled valences, and bound with black velvet, that she had drawn hundreds of times of a winter’s evening when she brought in the candles, and which she “helped make up again, after they had been callendered, with her own hands.”

What thoughts of joys for ever gone were associated with those handsome old curtains! How many long years had they and old Molly been fast friends? Molly knew. There had been the taking of them down when the summers came, and the putting them up in winter, when they always looked ten times fresher and handsomer than ever, faded and flown as they were. How nicely they suited the old drab and black carpet, and the drab

walls, and drab table-cloth—poor dear Misses was so fond of that colour. Now see!”

Yes, Hester was looking with all her eyes at them—the superb double set of dark green cloth, and their massive gilt cornices that now supplied their place. They *were* superb!

“But what has been done with the old ones?” asked Molly, tremulously.

It brought a smile to Faith’s face, which was of a particularly sage and grave cast; though she was yet a young woman, and as good looking a one, too, for a tawney complexion, as you would see anywhere. Faith smiled at Molly’s question; which displaying her brilliant white teeth, both Hester and Molly could not but grant to themselves that “the house-keeper was very handsome;” though there was a piercing glance she every now and then gave them with those cold black eyes of hers, that “went through them. Now, however, she was all smiles, as Molly was asking about the old drab curtains, for she had something to tell both her and Hester which she thought would gratify them. “As I mentioned to you before, Mr. Lyons has done what he has to the house, chiefly to make it as pleasant as possible to Miss Lyons, who has been accustomed to a charming home and every luxury at Trinidad. But

besides using the old materials in its re-construction, he has scrupulously preserved all the old fittings and furniture, though of a date so out of fashion as not to be any longer available for himself; and there they are at this moment in the great store-room next the loft, for Mrs. Joyce Balfour's old and faithful servants to choose any articles from they please, wherewith to comfortably furnish the cottage that your mother, Mary, Mrs. Balls, lived in for so many years. I have Mr. Lyons' permission to say that any part, or the whole, of them are at your service. But," added Faith, with another smile which fairly vanquished Hester, "whether Mr. Lyons intends to make over the freehold, in the cottage, to you, absolutely, or only to give you both a lease for life in it, I cannot tell. It is a nice, healthy, pleasant little place, he says, the pleasantest on 'the green,' and has a pretty garden to it, and, when done up, will be snug enough."

Of course it filled Molly's eyes with grateful tears, and pleasurably startled Hester so, that it was a little while before they could think of anything but of Mr. Lyons' goodness, and 'the great store-room up stairs, and the happy years, please God, yet to come for them in Mary's cottage. Then they were free to admit that they "never saw such a wonderful

improvement as Mr. Lyons had made ! look which way they would. What a sumptuous carpet ! and so soft and thick, it seemed like treading on stuffed velvet, didn't it ? Mercy ! what a splendid table, too—and only think of the little black oval mahogany one, with the three straight legs, that used to stand there, on which poor dear Master and Misses breakfasted, and dined, and teaed, and supped, contented, for forty years and upwards !”

“Which will do nicely, won't it ?” rejoined Faith, leading the way to the drawing room, “for your best parlour on ‘the green ;’ for it shines so, you can see your faces in it as well as in a looking-glass.”

It put Hester in mind of what she had good right to be proud of ; and carried her across the hall into the drawing-room with her head so up, that for half a minute or more she was Hester Dobbins again, in the old place, and none other, so entirely at home had the housekeeper's last affable remark made her. Then she opened her eyes wide to what had so dumb-struck Molly, when Faith threw open the drawing-room folding doors, that she drew back, transfixed ! as if it were profanation for humble folks like them to set foot on anything so precious.

If the dining-room was superb, what was to be said of the drawing-room?

Faith did the honours with much grace. Her guests had additional reason to congratulate themselves at every step. They were now lost in wonder! But the treasures of the 'great store room' above had yet to be explored; and though Molly missed the spacious old chintz sofa, and the twelve brass-inlaid roomy chairs, *en suite*, which lengthened her face a little; and Hester took time to accommodate herself to the novel sensation of seeing herself reflected, with her best bonnet on, turn whichever way she would, in glass after glass, till "it made her dizzy,"—there could be but one opinion:—"It was 'beautiful!'" it was "lovely!" it was "wonderful!" What would poor dear Misses say if she could look out of her grave and see it all?"

But when Faith calmly sat down on one of the rose-coloured satin couches, and invited Molly to do so, too, Hester turned as pale as a ghost. For at that moment, just as she was going to make herself 'at home' also, by the housekeeper's desire, in a delicious, velvet lounge chair, with "gold-arms and legs to it," the French clock on the mantle-piece struck eight, "which was the same time exactly she rose from her sick-bed that dreadful day when she

went down to see where Molly was, and fell over the dead bodies of poor dear Misses and Mrs. Ann in the passage."

It kept Molly rootedly standing so long, while Hester spoke of it, gazing on the pink satin sofas and curtains, and the gorgeously bordered velvet-piled carpet, "with the living flowers, as you might say, all over it, growing as it were under her feet, when but a short while back nothing would have made her believe anything could ever smile more," that Faith rose, and, crossing the room, asked them "if they would like to see a portrait of Mrs. Angelo Lyons when she was eighteen?"

It broke the spell. And sure enough, there was Rachel's angelic mother over the walnut-wood cottage-piano in her boudoir—as poor Ann Boys' little work-room was now called—just as she looked when she was eighteen, and her handsome husband might truly pride himself on having "the best as well as the most beautiful wife in the island."

As yet Molly and Hester had scarcely done justice to that sweet face of Miss Rachel's; nothing harmonizing—till the day when the housekeeper invited them to look over the place—with anything in the shape of those dear old forms and faces alone which they cared to associate with thoughts of Grey-

stone House. But things assumed another aspect now. "The ways of Providence were inscrutable; and always wise and merciful. And it behoved his blind creatures to submissively bow thereto, in affliction as well as happiness. God's will be done!" So now they could stand in "poor Miss Boys' work-room," as it went by the homely name of, without those cold shudders that came over them when they first heard what Mr. Lyons was having done to it, regardless of expense, for Miss Lyons' especial use. *Boudoir* was a foreign word; and Molly and Hester had heard enough of foreigners and their ways, to like *work-room* much better. "In poor dear Ann Boys' time, a deal of work was done in it—work for the poor, too, which you might call useful work! beautiful work! blessed work! Now see what it was going to be turned into! Into a *boudoir*. Mercy! and what was that? *Boudoir*! Why not call it Miss Lyons' work room? Some meaning in that."

And if, in obedience to orders, Faith let Mr. Lyons know what the folks said of it all, to amuse him, no doubt she understood the curl of the lip with which he listened to old Molly's misgivings, and Hester's "shrewd suspicions."

"Hem!" he would answer, smilingly, when Faith had laid her weekly budget before him, with the

Monday's bills; "touchy about *that* are they? *Boudoir*. Silly souls! Take down the dictionary there—the French one—and turn to the word. What does it say?"

"A lady's own room," read Faith, with her usual gravity.

"In which," added Mr. Lyons, as if vastly entertained with the idea, "only 'useful, beautiful, blessed work' was done in Miss Boys' time!" and he looked hard at his housekeeper as he said it. "It deserved a better reward. Then they called it *the work-room*? Hem!—now we call it the *Boudoir*: 'Useful—beautiful—blessed work!' Why not so one way as well as the other? Miss Lyons must look to it. Hem!—'useful—beautiful—blessed!' Sounds odd that, don't it?"

But we have to do with less critical eyes now than Mr. Angelo Lyons'.

"Heavenly!" exclaimed Mary Balls, with rapt fervour, at sight of the exquisite portrait in crayons of Miss Rachel's dead mamma; while, standing behind her, Hester gazed, no less struck with delighted admiration, at the angelic face which Faith assured them was "the loveliest in all Trinidad, and had never yet had justice done it by any artist."

"Beautiful! beautiful!" exclaimed Hester and

Molly, in one breath. "Miss Rachel herself, only older. What she will be—please God she lives—at eighteen!" And then their wondering eyes took a circuit of 'the little work-room,' as they used to call it; which associated as it was in some way with 'the great store-room' up stairs, brought a flush to Molly's cheeks, and made Hester so agreeable, that Faith had enough to do to listen to their praises, as she placidly drew their attention to the gorgeous objects around them. First, to the sumptuous Aubusson carpet, on which such beautiful little bouquets of mingled roses and lilies and violets were in full-blow, that it 'seemed a sin to tread on them;' then to the moss-rose chintz curtains, to correspond, looped up with such beautiful, broad, embroidered satin-bands, edged with richest lace—Faith's own handiwork—as 'eyes never beheld;' then to the walls chastely hung with fluted green and white silk, and the ceiling tastefully tinted and gilded to correspond; then to this matchless work of art, then to that; then to such a profusion of delicious little embroidered velvet and satin chairs and couches, and exquisite consoles, and cabinets, and curiosities, and gorgeously bound books, and costly *Sèvres* and Dresden china, and filigree flower baskets and work-boxes—that, seeing her guests fairly overwhelmed by it, Faith led the

way upstairs to the still more interesting treat in store for them.

And so they went from room to room. Till poor old Molly's face got so hot, and Hester had talked herself into so faint a key, that "Come up a little higher," proposed Faith, "into the store-room, and see how carefully Mr. Lyons has had nearly all the old furniture put away, for you to choose from, as soon as your cottage is ready."

The 'old store-room' was *in statu quo*, exactly as Molly left it—barring its present contents—the last time she had occasion to take their cat, Bony—as he was named, from his peculiarly lank lean looks—his daily evening meal up there, when he was too lazy or too sulky to come down for it. Oh ! how Molly loved that old store-room. She seemed to breathe again when Faith turned the rusty key in the lock, and she stood inside it. Molly was then, as it were, in her own quarters ; for "poor dear Misses always gave us that," she said, "and the room next it, to do as we liked with, and to hang our clothes in when we wanted, and iron and mangle." It was Molly's own rightful domain, compared with which all that the housekeeper had been showing her was not worth a farthing. "Ah ! how it brought to mind the times she and Barbara Gibbs, on 'the green,' had

got up all poor dear Misses and Miss Ann Boys' fine things, as easy as if she'd had nothing else to do; and there they were, fine things and coarse, in the drawers by Saturday, and poor dear Misses and Miss Ann saved pounds and pounds by it!"

"That's true!" echoed Hester, kindling, with her eyes on the heaps of 'old friends' peeping smilingly at them from under the sheets and counterpanes thrown over them to keep the dust and damp off."

"There they all are," smiled Faith. "It's pretty dry up here; and it won't be long now, Mr. Brindle says, before the cottage is ready."

Hester's breast heaved!

"You see," continued Faith, lifting up a corner of the counterpane, "the carpenter has placed them so that you can get at them without trouble. Though a little old-fashioned, some of them, you can't buy that quality now"—pointing to a heap of bedding, on which lay the "beautiful old black-mahogany oval dining table you could see your face in," and, beside it, the wicker-house that Bony used to go to bed in always, "down stairs," explained Hester, "till after the murder, when nothing could ever get him there again, after he took to the garret."

"Poor Bony!" sympathized Faith. "We let the

broken pane there go unmended, for him to come in and out, for he won't be sociable. It's more than a week since I saw him. How he lives we don't know, as he never touches the food we put in the yard for him. He won't live with us, and he won't live with you—strange, isn't it?"

"Law, then, I declare, there's the hassock, too!" exclaimed Hester, extending her arm to reach it, "that poor dear Mrs. Ann had her feet on while she was nursing him in her lap the day before the murder;" and overbalancing herself in her desire to draw it nearer, she fell forward on the heap of quilts and blankets it lay among, and out flew Bony from his hiding-place, and clearing every obstacle with a bound or two, found refuge up the chimney.

It startled them! For if Bony was "a bag of bones" before, now, though not in years, he was but the spectre of his former self; and there was something so shocking to Molly's mind in the savage growl he gave them, and the defiant glare of his eyes, before he turned to fly up the chimney when she tried to call him back, that, to use her own words to Hester shortly afterwards, "You might have knocked me down with the tip of your little finger, it hurt me so!"

Nor was Hester less grieved; "though she didn't

choose to show it just then, handsomely treated all day as they had been ; else she could have spoken her mind. "Cats wern't creatures to take to new comers ; least of all to them as turned the house out of window, as you might say, directly they set foot in it. Cats knew. Deceive a cat if you could, especially a Tom ! Bony growl at them—at those who brought him up from a kitten, and had nursed and fed him, and physicked him all those years ? Not he ! no, no ! Cats knew their company, leave them alone for that. But no, it wouldn't have done ever so, feel what she might, not to have known how to command herself—treated handsome as they had been. Bony fly up the chimney away from them ? Never !"

And there was all the more reason to believe it, to judge by what followed Bony's precipitate flight from her old friends. For piqued no less than hurt by it, as in a manner not very complimentary to herself, Faith tried what she could do to coax him down again. But all she got was a succession of such determined growls, in answer to her entreaties, that she gave it up in despair. Whereupon, Molly thought she would try, and, looking up at him and his glaring eyes—"Tomakin—Tomakin !" she cried—"Bony—Bony—don't you know me ?" when,

nearly blinding her with the dust and soot he brought down with him—himself, though snow-white, now as black as a sweep—with a spring he made good his footing on her shoulder, and humping his back and swelling out his tail, Faith had enough to do to keep at a respectful distance, and laugh at his grim face ; till having exchanged cordial greetings with Hester, and terribly smutted Molly's nose and mouth with his friendly kisses, away he went again out of window ; nor could all their coaxings and persuasions induce him to return to them.

It threw a cloud over Molly ; nor could Hester regain her cheerfulness as quickly as she felt she was bound to do, after the handsome way Mr. Lyons had behaved to them.

Faith smiled it off. But it was evident Bony's bad manners had made her no better friend of his. For "I have tried," she said, "to make a friend of him ; but he is a cross fellow, a very naughty fellow to behave so ; and if he don't repent it, and come and ask my pardon, I don't think I shall ever love him at all again."

It conveyed all that Molly, in reason, could expect ; which bringing them down into the hall :—

"You have not seen Mr. Lyons' room yet," said Faith, opening the door of it. "It is very plain.

But that's his taste. He dislikes show, for himself. His bed-room is equally so. You will recognize some more old faces here."

Which was true. For there was not an article of furniture in it, with the exception of the bookcases and a reading-chair and writing-cabinet, but what had stood there in old Tristram Balfour's time. It rather astonished Hester, who "would have fresh furnished that dull, dark, dingy back-room, overlooking the garden, and the shipping in the distance, before any other in the house." But there Molly couldn't agree with her. She always thought Mr. Balfour's room, as they called it, had "such a nice, quiet look. It was where he always did his writings," she said, "and settled his bills, and had us in once a quarter to pay us our wages. The only fault in it was the dry-rot, which made it smell a little damp and close sometimes when there was moist weather; and those nasty rats that came up from the river and gnawed through the boards and skirtings, trap or poison them as we would. Else, it was a pleasant room in summer, when you didn't want the sun, which fell upon the front enough to scorch it."

"So we hear," said Faith. "And you see there are the old brown curtains, and the old carpet, and

tables, and chairs, and looking-glass, and fender and fire-irons ; and very nice they look, too."

Molly's eyes glistened !

"Yes, and the two china owls, too, on the mantle-shelf, I declare !" exclaimed Hester, eyeing them fondly ; "and the match-pots, Mrs. Ann made, and the hour-glass."

"Looks quite natural ! don't it," sighed Molly, with her gaze on the baize table that "poor dear master used to count his money on."

"It pleased Mr. Lyons so much," smiled Faith, "that he let it stand, as you see, untouched. The carpet is very old. But 'it reminds him,' he tells Miss Rachel, 'of what he used to think very fine indeed ! when he was a boy, and came to see Mr. Balfour once, when he gave him half a guinea.'"

It was the climax—Molly's heart could bear no more—out burst the tears. Nor were they dried away, till, being reminded by Hester, going home, "how good and just and merciful Providence was in all its dispensations ! and what a thorough christian feeling man Mr. Lyons seemed to be ! and what an angel Miss Rachel was ! and how kind Faith had been to Bony, notwithstanding his bad manners !" her tearful thoughts reverted to the old store-room. And then, "yes, yes !" she ejaculated, with

pious resignation, "the Lord's will be done, whose judgments are ever just. How good and bountiful ! how very good of Him ! to put it in their hearts, Hester, to do so much for us ? Ah me ! how mysterious are God's ways !"—and fell asleep, to dream of it.

Mr. Lyons had taken Rachel to spend the day at Sir Compton Thornhill's charming place, Buck Park ; so Faith thought it a favourable opportunity, during their absence, to ask the Greystone House old servants to come and see how considerate Mr. Lyons had been for them, while re-constructing and re-furnishing it, as well as for himself. It fulfilled her every wish. What pleasure there is in making others happy ! Why not have suggested it to the insatiable monarch, who would have given his crown for a new sensation ? It would have been difficult for Faith Lincoln to have named a want unsatisfied, as far as her office of housekeeper to Angelo Lyons, Esq., was concerned, when Greystone House was pronounced by the workmen *finished*. She had but to ask and to have. And asked she had, till she could ask no more ; or, rather, till, in answer to Mr. Lyons' question, "what else do you want ?" she literally was at a loss to conceive.

But Mr. Lyons knew better.

“There is this to be done,” he remarked—“Molly and Hester will want their cottage furnished. How do it better than as they would best like to do it themselves? You are free to give them any part or all of the old things up stairs.”

The very thought of it was ennobling! And Faith was sensible, on taking leave of her guests next day, of a thrill of satisfaction which every wish fulfilled, since they set foot in Shiphampton, had failed to impart, though it might be truly said she was loaded to surfeit. The consequence of which was, there was such an unusual sparkle in her eyes when Miss Rachel came home and ran to tell her “what a beautiful place Buck Park was;” and “how much she liked Lady Thornhill;” and “what a sweet, dear, kind girl Jane Rosse, the vicar’s daughter, was;” but how she “felt afraid of Clara Thornhill, who was so proud!”—that calling her to her bed-side, as usual, before going to sleep—

“Faith,” said Rachel, looking intently at her with her large blue eyes, in the way she always did when she was full of anything; “what makes you so happy to-night?”

“Am I not always so?” smiled Faith. “I ought to be.”

“Yes, yes. But I know there is something more

than that now. Of course you ought to be! But what were you singing about so gaily when I came in?"

"Gaily!" laughed Faith.

"It seemed so to me."

"Ah, you were so gay yourself, Miss! It was about *The Lost Boy*. Do you call that a gay song?"

"Oh, no! But you were singing it so gaily, so sweetly! Not as you sometimes do, when I could cry almost to hear you. Who taught it you? Why do you love so to sing it, Faith? Do tell me! You are always singing it."

"As I used in France? Yes, I learnt it there. All the others sang French songs—I that."

"Because it was English? and you loved England more than France? Oh, yes, Faith, and so do I! And the words are so pretty! Whose are they?"

"His who wrote them—all but a word or two of my own, which I fancied better."

"Repeat them, will you, Faith? Yes, do!" And seeing the sleepy lids gradually dropping, Faith thought the second verse would be enough to lull the fond heart off, and so began:—

"O'er the mountain, through the wild wood,
Where I used with him to stray,

Where the flowers are freshly springing,
There I wander day by day :
There I wander, growing fonder
Of the child that made my joy ;
On the echoes wildly calling,
To restore my darling boy."

When pausing, to see if she were still awake—

"Go on, Faith, please!" came with such an irresistible appeal, that there was no refusing it; especially as the old song seemed to have no less a charm that night for Faith herself than for sweet Miss Rachel:—

"But in vain my plaintive calling,
Tears are falling all in vain,
I shall never, but in Heaven,
See his darling face again :—
Fare thee well, my child, for ever !
In this world I've lost my joy ;
In the *next* we ne'er shall sever,
There I'll find my angel boy."

"Faith—why do you love that song so much?"

"Because it reminds me, Miss Rachel, as you know, of the poor baby I lost out of my lap at Pau, under the beech trees. Ah, Miss! do you think I can ever forget it? No, no!"

"Was he a pretty baby, Faith?"

"As beautiful a boy as eyes ever beheld! much

more beautiful than either his father or mother! He was like neither of them. His features were perfect! But, you know, he was only a baby then; and babies change so as they grow older."

"Faith!"

"Yes, Miss Rachel."

"You can't think what a beautiful place Buck Park is!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes—and what a dear, good, kind girl Jane Rosse is! I am sure I shall love her. She is two years older than I am. I wish I was sixteen, Faith!"

"Do you?"

"Don't you think we shall be very happy now at Shiphampton?"

"Why not?"

"Oh, yes! we shall, shan't we? And papa has given Molly and Hester the old things, to furnish their cottage with? How good of him!"

"Yes, indeed!"

"No wonder you were so gay, Faith!"

"You will never go to sleep if I talk to you so."

"How different the house looks now! But shall I tell you what I love best of all in it—of all the fine things I mean—yes, it's true—what I brought

from France with me—you know—my dear old poor-box.”

And Faith too well knew whose child Rachel Lyons was, on the mother’s side, to doubt it.

CHAPTER VII.

FAITH LINCOLN.

FAITH's fondness for her favourite song—the pathetic words of which this was not the first time by many Miss Rachel had asked her to repeat, when she heard her singing it—seems to require some explanation.

Faith Lincoln's was a strange disposition. It must have been, to have so calmly and consistently and continuously borne with Mr. Lyons, which was "very trying at times, almost beyond endurance." Then, again, Faith had certain deep grievances of her own, with which he, Angelo Lyons, her late father's partner at Trinidad, was mixed up, to subdue which required no little control over herself. Her father was well off when Mr. Lyons joined him in business; soon after which he became involved in bad speculations, and failed, and died broken-hearted; and in less than three years afterwards

Angelo Lyons was a flourishing man. It called for nerve, on Faith's part, to believe "it was her father's fault that they had failed, not his." So people said. And so Mr. Lyons said himself; and his undoubted skill and tact in business, and the good name they earned him, and the rapid fortune besides, seemed to leave no doubt about it in Trinidad and wherever else he was known.

So Faith took counsel with herself, and prudently yielding to circumstances which she could not prevent, was chiefly concerned in determining how best to act under them. She was then penniless; the wide world was before her; she had many friends; but Faith Lincoln was not one to eat the bread of dependence; and hearing how sadly Mr. Oliver Boys, of Antigua, was put out by the death of his housekeeper, she applied for the place, and obtained it. It was a good place. But if Faith's ambition ever indulged the hope that Mr. Boys would make her his wife, she was disappointed. It certainly was well worth trying for. Perhaps she did try for it. And if so, why not? She came of as good blood, by her father's side, as Oliver Boys, and might have sat at the head of his table among the best of his class, and lost nothing by it. She was young, she was lady-like in her speech and manners,

unusually well-informed, handsome, agreeable, when she chose to be so, could sing, and play on the piano, had rather a commanding air, a well-toned voice, knew when to hold her tongue, and when to talk, was graceful in company, had surprising self-possession, and an indomitable spirit equal to any effort or emergency, when so minded.

But Mr. Boys died a bachelor—and the wide world was again Faith Lincoln's, to try her luck in and traverse wherever she would. Whereupon, Faith, in commercial phrase, 'took stock' of how she stood. Clearly, she was more than £1,500 better off than when she entered Mr. Oliver Boys' service—no bad fruits of five years clever conduct. And she owed it all to her own steady efforts; but for which, would he have left her anything? Oliver Boys was not a man to be satisfied with duties half done."

Of course it gave her great weight in Leonard Balfour's eyes, who was then courting Ann Boys; and there was a home still in Antigua for her, with every comfort and consequence if she would have it. But Faith said nay; she would go to her friends in Trinidad, and "consult her late father's partner, Mr. Angelo Lyons, as to the best mode of investing her little capital. He would put it out for her at

more interest than she could get elsewhere." It seemed a strange step for her to take, with it always pressing on her, "how her father had failed when Mr. Lyons joined him in partnership." Nevertheless, Faith deemed it right that she should go to Trinidad; and to Trinidad she went, as the reader knows.

And here all that can be reliably recorded of her further progress, is, that, after taking counsel with Mr. Lyons, as to her future course, she accompanied her relative, Mrs. Ruth Lyons, and Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Balfour to France, and was Mrs. Balfour's constant attendant there till the loss of her baby. That then—when Ann Balfour rejoined Aunt Joyce in Shiphampton—she returned to Trinidad to wait on Miss Lyons, and be a sort of nurse and governess to her during a severe illness. And that then—when Rachel got well again—she prevailed on Mr. Lyons to let her take her to visit Mrs. Ruth Lyons at Pau, "the air of which," she said, "would do her so much good; and where she could have competent professors to teach her French, and German, and Italian, and music, and dancing and deportment."

From childhood, Faith Lincoln's was ever a calm, contemplative, deep-thinking mind, which preferred

rather to sit apart and look on at others playing their various games of life, than to take a hand in them. Her father used to call her 'Miss Proper,' her mother, 'Miss Perfect;' though neither of them had any specific reason for so doing, unless it were that Faith was the only one of their five that shewed the slightest sign of particular intelligence, all the rest being as shallow-minded and silly as themselves. And perhaps it was this very circumstance that had more to do, in giving the tone and temper to Faith's character, than anything else. By nature she was grave; by nature her parents and brothers and sisters were gay and giddy; there were few real sympathies between them; and, consequently, each held to his and her own ways, none the less determinedly because the individuality was so flattering when they saw themselves reflected in each other.

Faith, though the youngest girl of the family, was the first to leave home. Her father coughed spasmodically, as he wished her good-bye, and her mother whimpered a little, and her brothers and sisters whined a good deal; but if she herself shed a tear, no one saw it, whatever she felt. Feel she did very glad to be free. Once off, she had to rely on herself. It had no terrors for Faith. Was she of a hard nature? had she any of Mr. Lyons' sturdy

indifference to ordinary feelings, that they agreed so well together? Oh, no! Faith had sensibilities enough, and warm ones, too, when anything happened to elicit them. Otherwise with ninety-nine persons out of a hundred she passed for a very cold, unemotional person. Perhaps it rather tallied with her temper to seem so; may be silence suited her best. But she could be gracious, nay affable, if she pleased; though for once that she smiled, days, weeks, months would pass, and scarcely a momentary change be visible in her placid, imperturbable face.

Some said she was 'absurdly proud;' others that she was 'heartless;' others that she had 'something on her conscience.' Proud she certainly was, and cold as a stone to those she had no care for, and it must be owned that her usual aspect and demeanour told of anything but a mind at ease.

Had Faith been 'disappointed in love?'

Many were of that opinion, and there were grounds for it. Not that it was supposed, by those who knew her, that her affections had any share in her ambition to be Mrs. Oliver Boys. If her heart were her own when she went there, rumour belied her. Rumour positively asserted that she had 'long before then parted with it to Mr. Angelo Lyons; but whether she possessed his, in return, nobody

could tell but herself. She had always expressed great admiration for his person from the first time he became intimate with her father; and his attentions to her were remarkable after his wife's death, and his natural seriousness and reserve increased so, that no woman could please him but her.' Further than which, not even rumour professed to be sure of. But of one thing every one, who knew anything of the matter, was certain—there seemed to be a very good understanding between Mr. Angelo Lyons and Faith Lincoln; though not a lip had yet dared to do more than express its wonder, 'whether Faith's fidelity and cleverness would ever meet with its expected reward?'

What was it to anybody but Faith herself? No doubt Faith was well aware of what was said of her, and of the lively interest folks took in her behalf; but if she ever heaved an anxious sigh about it, it was not on that account. Mr. Lyons was no ordinary man, to be told by any one living what he ought to do, or what not. Anything in the shape of an espousal of her cause, come from whom it might, would have only curled his lip. His heart was not to be won in that way. To be won at all, it must see with its own eyes and act from its own impulses; and it might possibly have been the

doubt in her mind "whether, with all his preferences for her, as a woman, she came up to that standard which alone would make her his, at the altar and in the sight of all men?" that sometimes filled her bosom with anxious thoughts—none the less agitating because known only to herself.

Faith had gained little from home-influences to improve her. The idle levity there from morning to night—for be it remembered, courteous reader, Faith Lincoln was brought up as a lady—had the effect of rather confirming and deepening the natural matter of fact impressions of her mind than in any way removing them. So that by the time she left it to get her own living, those in-born impressions had been fixed in it so firmly by conviction, that it became a settled principle with her to adopt them as her rule of conduct, and patiently and persistently follow them, lead her where they would. They led her through many trials and troubles before they brought her to Mr. Oliver Boys. No matter—there she was. And the first letter she received, after her safe settlement in Antigua, was from Mr. Angelo Lyons, to say "how extremely happy he was to hear from her that she had succeeded so well."

Had an acute anatomist of the human heart been looking on when Faith Lincoln read that letter of

congratulations from Angelo Lyons, he would have seen, notwithstanding the marble calmness of her face, the stifled agony she was suffering.

“Then she loved him?”

So they said in Trinidad; and, “for that very reason, left him to live in Antigua.”

Well, Mr. Oliver Boys died; and Faith was fifteen hundred pounds richer for it. It materially altered her position at Trinidad. Who knew but that Mr. Boys would have married her, had he lived. The presumption was that he would. “He never would have left her any legacy,” people said, “if he had not greatly esteemed her. There was no doubt it would have been much larger but that he was taken away so quickly. She must have had sterling worth, as a woman, to have so pleased Mr. Oliver Boys. It was a great feather in her cap!” and none welcomed her back to Trinidad, for it, more cordially than Mr. Angelo Lyons. Five years’ separation had worked changes in them both, but their re-union suffered nothing in old memories from it. He was, if possible, handsomer, she of a more comely presence; five summers had brought his manhood to riper maturity, and more fully developed only what was most charming in her; he was but thirty-six, she but thirty-two, and as they stood side by side,

they might have been taken for brother and sister, so much alike were their features and figures.

Whatever they were in each other's estimation from this time, in the world's, five years' separation had given a new character and complexion to their intimacy. Nothing could be more correct than their bearing towards each other, nothing more proper than their conduct. Scandal was silenced. And when it transpired that Faith Lincoln had Miss Lyons in charge during the long illness she was laid up with, and afterwards had taken her to Pau for change of air, and French, and German, and Italian—it was evident “how capable and trustworthy she must have been, to have been left fifteen hundred pounds by Mr. Boys; and into whose hands, therefore, could Mr. Lyons have entrusted his child, while away from him, with more confidence than to her who had done her duty so well?”

But though her two years' absence in Antigua had robbed Faith of none of her personal charms in Mr. Angelo Lyons' eyes, he could not but see how much graver she had grown since she took farewell of poor Ann Balfour, after the loss of her baby-boy. Evidently that calamitous event had made a deep impression on her; the more so, perhaps, because many said “it never would have happened if she

had been as careful as she ought to have been." It was, indeed, a mysterious affair; and some hesitated not to attach an amount of blame, if not suspicion, to Faith, as Master Leonard's nurse, that might well trouble her, if her conscience were as clear about it as Ann Balfour herself always believed it to be, however much Ann dreaded Ruth Lyons.

Faith was never quite herself again from that time. It gave a turn and tone to her future character that often brought Angelo Lyons's piercing eyes on her, when she thought herself unobserved, with an expression in them of such deep meaning, there was no fathoming it. It was compounded of hope, and fear, and certainty, and doubt, and wonder, and admiration, as if sometimes he hardly knew whether he admired her or not; when seeing him watching her, she would lift her dark eyes to his with a look of such entire devotion to his interests, that he must have been harder than case-hardened steel itself not to have responded to, whatever he felt.

There is no such thing as a 'heartless' woman—there never was, and there never will be, as long as nature has a hand in it. The veriest she-devils acknowledge it towards their offsprings. Lady Macbeth did; and even that dreadful mother who sent her babe adrift the other day down the Pad-

dington canal in a basket, carefully suckled it first. There is the native germ of the mother in every woman's breast: it may be blighted and blasted in one, and beautifully brought to blossom and bear abundant fruit in another, but no woman's heart is without it; there it is, inseparably implanted and interwoven in her by the law of her being; it was born with her, and it will die with her; she could no more quite dispossess herself of it than she could change her sex, or, in fact, be the hideous monster that she sometimes appears.

Which only applies to Faith Lincoln thus.— From childhood Faith was called “heartless;” and, up to the day on which, by her “culpable negligence, she let the baby-boy, intrusted to her care, be stolen out of her lap, while asleep, no one seems to remember any evidence of aught, in the shape of *the mother*, on her part. But then she changed, they said; “and not even Ann Balfour herself seemed to take poor little Leonard's loss more to heart than Faith Lincoln did.”

If not *the mother* speaking in her, what was it?

Perhaps it was the difficulty that Angelo Lyons felt to answer this question to his satisfaction, which caused him to scan her so curiously at times when she was more thoughtful than usual.

The mention of that melancholy day never failed to affect Faith, though it required a keen eye to see how much. And Mr. Lyons would purposely talk of it, and of its consequences to him in a worldly point of view; during which he would sit and note every change of her countenance, while she replied to his questions with all the calm readiness of one who felt it a relief to have her woman's sympathies thus plainly appealed to, and find such a vent for them. It was a subject Faith never shrank from; nay, she talked of it to Miss Lyons oftener than any other; for Rachel loved to hear about it, and listen to those touching words of the old song that had lulled her to sleep so often in France, better than all the other songs Faith sang her. For there was a touching cadence in her voice when she sang that song of *The Lost Boy*, so sweet, so full of feeling, that Rachel had then but to think of her "dear, darling mamma," who used also to "sing to her at Tobago so sweetly!" And then she was pretty sure to presently twine her arms round Faith's neck; when, if she were the "heartless" creature they said she was, oh, how deceitful that woman's heart of Faith's must have been, how desperately wicked!

Faith seemed to feel the loss of the stolen babe entrusted to her, acutely. Many said it was "the

first time she had ever exhibited any feeling at all ;” that she had “never manifested much affection even for her parents, and brothers, and sisters ; and, yet, had always had such a happy home.” Perhaps Faith thought otherwise. It was luxurious enough ; and no fault would have been found with her, had she, like Zoe Ghrimes, of Barbadoes, done nothing from morning to night but eat and drink, and doze away the sultry hours, and play the guitar. Faith’s home afforded her every thing but food for the mind ; unless that might be called occupation which was continually convincing her how vain, and empty, and undignified it was, compared with what would have made a very different creature of herself, could she have found a nature in it congenial with hers, instead of the perpetual folly and frivolity it teemed with.

Doubtless, there was the true woman’s heart under that placid, imperturbable surface of Faith Lincoln’s, only know how to get at it. Though so long dormant, there the germ had been from her birth, sensible and prolific enough, but unseen, unknown ; because but one ruling principle could rouse it into action, and prove what it was capable of. So she was said to have “no feeling.” Till the loss of little Leonard, out of her lap, when she

fell asleep with him under the trees at Pau, seemed so palpably to refute it, that even Angelo Lyons, deep-seeing as he was, would sit and curiously study her countenance, as if he had yet to discover more in her than he already knew of.

Nor were Rachel's the only ears in the house that listened wistfully when Faith was singing the song of *The Lost Boy*, which she often did when alone, or when little Miss coaxed it out of her. No less would Mr. Lyons give absorbed ear to it than his child did, of an evening when the house was quiet, and Rachel had gone to bed, and he had no companion down-stairs in that dull, dingy, back-room of his, but his own thoughts. Then, when Faith's mournful tones reached him, he would rise from his chair, and pace up and down the room, with the door a-jar, that he might hear it the better; though, sometimes, his brow was clouded and knit impatiently, as if it wearied him, and he wished it over. He might have put an end to it in a moment, as he would have done quickly enough with anything else, had it plagued him; but he never did. Nay, though Rachel would often make her continue singing it to her till she fell asleep, so that at last it grievously fidgetted him, on he would go, meditatively measuring the floor from end to end, sometimes stop-

ping to listen, as if to catch the words; when he would keep repeating them to himself, especially the two lines—

“I shall never, but in Heaven,
See his darling face again,”—

Till sinking again into his chair, as the song ceased, he would drop his chin on his chest; and if he slept not till Faith came down, there remain motionless till she did, and buried in thought.

It was but natural that Mr. Lyons should never hear that song sung without emotion. Little Leonard's sad fate—first to be kidnapped by gipsies, it was supposed, and then drowned at sea—might well afflict him, mixed up as it was with so much mystery as to defy all their endeavours to unravel it. That the boy was dead no one doubted for a moment; but, as poor Aunt Joyce said on the night of her murder, “no one had seen his dead body, so how could they say he was drowned?”

“Very true,” Mr. Lyons would admit, when any one talked to him about it; and it might have been those words of Aunt Joyce's recurring to him whenever Faith was singing the song, that set him musing as to “the possibility of there being anything more in them than the fretful pining of a sorrowing

spirit, clinging to the last to the treasured one idea.” How held he the great wealth that he then possessed from the Balfour property? Subject of course to any better right than his own to it. There could be no other right, if in existence, than Leonard and Ann Balfour’s son’s, their only child, born at Pau, in France, and who perished with the rest of the *Jeanne Jules*’ passengers, when it was wrecked off the Dutch coast. It was enough to set him thinking, when he heard Faith continually repeating—as if it needed repetition—

“I shall never, but in Heaven,
See his darling face again :”

for she always dropped her voice at that part, as if, though she gave it utterance, it was with a forlorn hope that it might not be true ; at least, so it possibly sounded to Mr. Lyons, sharing her feelings as it was natural he should do, suddenly loaded with riches by the strange course of events as he had been.

Had Faith Lincoln any doubt about it? Did she or did she not harbour a forlorn hope in that “unfathomable” heart of hers that the poor babe had not perished? If so, it is difficult to conceive what grounds she had for it. For it was as certified a fact, in the eyes of the world, that the *Jeanne Jules* French

trader was lost at sea, and all on board of her, as that—from circumstances that had since come to light—"the lost boy and his kidnappers were on their way, in her, to Amsterdam when she went down within half a mile of dry land."

What hopes, therefore, Faith could have had that a baby, like little Leonard Balfour was, could escape, when all the rest perished, by universal accord, might well be a marvel to Mr. Lyons, if indeed he supposed she had any.

Probably Faith had none. But she never sang that favourite song of hers, in his hearing, but it struck Mr. Lyons that her heart heaved, notwithstanding her voice faltered, when she came to the words—

"I shall never, but in Heaven,
See his darling face again!—"

and why was that, if she believed him dead, and that he, Angelo Lyons, was in possession of no more than his own?

CHAPTER VIII.

THROWS SOME LIGHT ON THE RELATIVE POSITIONS,
AT GREYSTONE HOUSE, BETWEEN MR. ANGELO
LYONS AND HIS HOUSE-KEEPER.

It has already been observed that, with extraordinary charms of person and manners, when it pleased him to be agreeable, Mr. Angelo Lyons was a clever man of business. At first sight you would have scarcely supposed it. There was an easy, indifferent elegance about him that rather favoured the impression, till you knew him, that he preferred ease to energy, and the placid pleasures of his library, and pictures, and marbles, and matchless many gems of art and vertu, to the ordinary routine of the counting-house. If so, the more the merit. For engage in what he would, he did it well, thoroughly well, to the satisfaction of all parties, be the issue what it might to himself. Whether he lost or won, Angelo Lyons went manfully and honourably through

his commercial transactions. There was no shirking, with him, nor shuffling ; what he undertook, he carried out as cheerfully, seemingly, when it was to his disadvantage, as not. His word, once pledged, was never broken ; his sign-manual to a bill or draft was “money down ;” and to have dealings with him, of any kind, was soon the same thing in Shiphampton, and about, as being “in very good hands,” and enjoying a very creditable position of your own.

Perhaps Angelo Lyons owed some of the praises he got to people’s first erroneous views of him. It was such an agreeable surprise, may be, to find the polished gentleman, at market, so conversant with its customs, so easy and affable, so pleasant, so plain-spoken. Freezing as he looked, at first sight, he melted you the moment he addressed you ; and if he shook hands with you, the elevation it gave you in your own esteem was something ; but nothing, if you were modest, to what it did for you in the eyes of others, who, to have been similarly complimented by Mr. Angelo Lyons—with that “high mind of his”—would have been a pretty penny in their pockets, made the most of.

Mr. Angelo Lyons was popular. His handsome face and elegant person and manners did a good

deal for him, but his perfect knowledge of business, and skill and tact in his dealings, and the unflagging spirit he carried them on with, as also the reputation he got of "never taking an unfair advantage, though often able from his wealth and influence to command the market," did a great deal more. His steady integrity and straightforwardness, too, were proverbial. It was "see how Mr. Lyons does this," and "see how Mr. Lyons does that;" till do what Mr. Angelo Lyons would, it was right; and very proud indeed was the opulent old Borough of him!

Shiphampton was eminently a mercantile town; and had Mr. Lyons been the mere elegant gentleman he looked, at market, the first time he quietly passed through it on the arm of his friend Sir Compton Thornhill, who had "taken a vast fancy to him," his riches, however abundant, would have made a very different sort of great man of him in the business-driving eyes of the persons he would be constantly jostling against in his new home, to what he intended they should do before he came to live there. Mr. Lyons took a pretty correct measure of himself and his whereabouts ere he determined to reconstruct Greystone House, and to make it his residence. He was quite aware of what kind of place it was, and how he must live and act in it, as

the successor of Balfour, Balfour & Co., ever to be the man in Shiphampton he wished to be. It could be achieved but in one way: and where Angelo Lyons had said *I will*, achieved it *would be*, if within the pale of possibility.

There were great temptations to induce him to make Shiphampton his home. He stepped into a ready-made wholesale shipping-business there, second to none in England for its Western relations. It could have been carried on without him, by deputy; but Angelo Lyons knew his own power, and preferred to trust to it, in a matter so material to himself, rather than to any one else's. It would not in the least lessen his Trinidad interests; but, on the contrary, considerably improve them. He would be "killing two birds with one stone; and in a short time make the House of Balfour, Balfour and Co. worth much more than it had been since the death of Tristram Balfour, and the management of it had devolved on others. It was not paying what it ought, and unquestionably what it could be made to pay in competent hands."

Mr. Angelo Lyons felt himself fully equal to the task he had set himself; and it remained to be seen whether he would be easily beaten. The carrying it out to the extent he meditated involved no little

labour and outlay ; but “ what then, if he had money enough, and it gave him plenty of food for his mind ?” For that was what he “ *must* have,” Faith told every one who spoke, in surprise, to her about his activity—“ food for the mind ; or, with his enterprising disposition, how could Mr. Lyons be as happy as he is ?” said Faith.

It was a fine example to set ! and soon got Mr. Angelo Lyons a name in the town that made Faith’s eyes sparkle ! and put the fine old English Baronet, of Buck Park, at his wits end to make out “ how it was he had been their High Sheriff twice, and a Justice of the peace for two and twenty years, and thrice returned for the Borough, without opposition—yes, and spent twelve thousand a year among them since the death of his father,—and, beyond what they could get out of him every year in the county, how much did they care for him ?—not a rap !”

“ And, yet, you are always doing so much for them ?” Mr. Lyons would condolingly remind him, when they talked of it.

“ Much ! yes !” would Sir Compton “ humph” out, with a snarl, which Lady Thornhill could never break him of, nor Clara either, his eldest daughter, who, they said, could do anything with him ; “ and more fool for my pains ! Aye, like that, don’t

they?—hunting with my hounds, thinning my pheasants for me, bagging my partridges, coursing my hares, scouring my covers, and never a trout now to be caught worth cooking? No doubt. Always doing for them!’ And if I wanted a bill backed to-morrow for Five Hundred—how then? Scribble Angelo Lyons across it—ha! ha!—good for Fifty Thousand, eh, in a moment? Splendid thing to be you!’

It more than ever satisfied Mr. Angelo Lyons that “the real greatness of individuals, as of nations, lies in their credit.” But as it was an argument the least likely to be entertained for an instant at Buck Park—“the proud blood of whose noble Lords and Masters could be traced back to beyond King John,” they said—he prudently permitted the bluff old baronet to grunt and grumble as he liked, when thundering out against “those democrat-dogs down town,” by which he got on exceedingly well with him, as he had every wish to do.

Mr. Lyons was not blind to the personal sacrifices he should make, as well as the pounds, shillings, and pence sterling, when he went to live in Shiphampton. It was a place by no means after his own heart. It was essentially a mercantile seaport town, where wealth was to be amassed; but

where, though there was some learned talk of the arts, and of literature, and of science, at some of the rich dons' palatial houses, and at the Reading Rooms, and among the civil engineers on the docks and railways, few men of refined tastes would have found food for a mind like Angelo Lyons,' exquisitely alive to all that breathed of intellectual enjoyment, as cultivated by him, after his own peculiar views, through many years' study of the best "schools" at home and abroad. But *duty*, with Mr. Lyons, was before all other considerations; and it being evident how it only needed his personal superintendence to restore the once first-class House of Balfour, Balfour & Co. to its former opulence, he would "shew the town how much he respected the honored memories of his predecessors of Greystone House, by making it his home; and so employing his large wealth to enrich the place which, before all others, had the first claim on him, as its lineal possessor."

"Nobly done!" said the Town, with one voice; and Mr. Angelo Lyons took possession accordingly, amidst such greetings, and congratulations, and ringing of bells, and flowery speeches, and flowing of ale, as might well flush Miss Rachel's pretty cheeks, as she went with Faith over their splendid new home, and elatedly acknowledged "how different

it now looked to when she first saw it from the road with her papa," that day of their arrival at the hotel, when she felt "so sad at the thought of living there, that she cried all night about it."

Different it was, indeed ! And while the "nine days wonder" lasted, the astounded eyes from all parts, to see "how Mr. Lyons meant to wipe away the odium off it by means that might not a little advantage those who came there," bore testimony to the excellent judgment he had evinced in studying only how to best act in the matter for the town's good, as well as his own, apart from all personal feelings, and in defiance of all doubts and difficulties.

And there was no less curiosity to see how the inside of Greystone House had been improved and beautified, than the out, by its new master ; nor would Mr. Lyons have any one refused who expressed a wish to be shown over it. There was free admittance during the month he was in London with his daughter, to complete it, and to find a competent governess for her ; at the end of which the public satisfaction was replete. There was nothing too good they could say of a man who had "behaved so handsomely, in return for the expenses he had been put to." The housekeeper's untiring civilities, too, were "beyond praise, besieged as she had

been from morning to night by sight-seers ;” and as for Miss Lyons, “ if she were only half as beautiful as the portrait of her mother in the *boudoir*, she must indeed be an angel ! and no wonder her father idolized her as he did, and thought nothing he could do for her too much.”

And now, left in quiet possession of his own, it was “straight-sailing,” as the people expressed it, “with their new Borough Councilman ;” who soon gave such fresh life and vigour to the shipping interests he shared so largely in, that, put on their mettle by it, up rose his brother shipowners, determined to see what they could do, too ; and a fine feather it was in Angelo Lyons’ cap, as he walked down to the docks, to be told on all sides how “the good old times of the Balfours had come back again,” and to whom they owed it all.

Praise is pleasant. No philosophy is above it. Perhaps no man ever seemed to care less for it, for himself, than Angelo Lyons, and probably no man liked it more. He was exceedingly averse to compliment, and impatient of personal remarks ; but Faith Lincoln knew him well enough to go through her news-budgets, when she had any to tell him, notwithstanding those curls-of-the-lip with which

he listened to her, though seemingly it was so much to his credit.

"Oh!" he would answer, abstractedly, with his eyes on his hands, which were singularly white and well-shaped—"say all that of me, do they? Ha! and what would they say, I wonder, if, instead of the rich man I happen to be, I was of those who alone have much chance, they tell us, of going to heaven? What sort of a fellow should I be then?"

"Neither better nor worse than you are now," replied Faith, with her usual unreserve, when thus invited to talk with him freely.

"Oh! How do you mean?"

"That it's always possible to be rich and grasping, as well as poor and generous."

"Ha! money hardens you, does it?"

"When it don't, it's well, sir."

"Hem! I suppose so. Well for all parties?" and seemingly pleased with the thoughts it induced, "What a pity it should have that unfortunate effect," he smiled.

Faith made no reply.

"To shut you out for ever! A comfort for the poor? Strange, isn't it?"

But if he wanted her answer, to curl his lip at it, Faith was silent.

“Hem—hardens—shuts you out? Vile ore! Ha!—and all of us, high and low, rich and poor, striving for it so! And can’t do without it, any of us—no, not even the saints of earth themselves, can they?”

“The good, and just, and generous,” rejoined Faith, slightly colouring, “cannot have too much of it.”

“Hem!”—still with his eyes on his hands—“that seems so odd, too—and *they* are usually the poorest? And are so kept, eh, out of much mercy? Silly souls, not to know it. Not the devoutest of them but would be Angelo Lyons to-morrow—queer, eh?”

“How so—if they think him just and generous?” and while saying it, Faith’s voice perceptibly sank a little, like it always did when she came to the words in the song of *The Lost Boy* that she loved so much:—

“I shall never, but in Heaven,
See his darling face again.”

Till recovering it, Mr. Lyons would raise his eyes from his hands, and scan her from head to foot so curiously that it called for all her self-possession to maintain her ground with him—on her ability to do

which depended the continuance, or otherwise, of her influence over him.

Still, in spite of his affected indifference to his neighbours' high opinion of the "noble use he made of his money," Faith's news-budgets never failed to interest Mr. Angelo Lyons. If his lip curled at the homage paid by the world to the wealthy, the while it was reckoning them among the 'lost ones,' Angelo Lyons, with all his superiority to vulgar emotions, knew the value of a good reputation, as also the great gain there was in godliness, worship at the shrine of whatever idol he might.

And when Faith put this to him in any of their parlour debates :—

"Yes," he would acknowledge, with a smile, "I am a member of society, that's true, and must take the consequences. I must, *per* force, obey its laws? Of course. And if it put five thousand a-year in my pocket, no bad laws either. I'll tell you what I see staring me in the face wherever I go."

"Ah, yes!" rejoined Faith, with a suppressed sigh, "and so do I."

"What?"

But, on reflection, Faith preferred keeping the rest to herself.

"Why sigh about it?" he asked her.

“ Did I ? ”

He laughed.

“ You often say I sigh when I don’t know it.”

“ Which proves how silly it is ! It’s a habit you’ve got. You never used to do it. There again ! ” as her breast heaved, “ what was that ? ”

“ However bright the present,” she said—and as their eyes met, his were not without a look of tenderness, which for an instant brought the tears into hers—“ however happy I may be now, the past had its sweet dreams, too—very sweet ones ! ”

“ Dreams only ? ”

Her lips quivered ; but, checking herself—“ What is it that is always staring you in the face ? ” she asked him. “ You were going to tell me when I interrupted you.”

“ The four words first taught me, as soon as I could first see, and hear, and understand—the four words comprising, in a nut-shell, the pith and purpose of the whole social code—the four words we all of us live, and eat, and drink, and sleep, and thrive, or starve, to the tune of, from the cradle to the grave—society’s mainstay—nature’s first law—*take care of yourself*. It goes very well, don’t it, with my motto—*Fiat ?* No bad idea that of old Isaac Lyons, my great-grandfather ? *Fiat !* Ha !—yes,

and do it he did, if it had to be done, whatever it was—no flinching, no, no ! Began life without a penny ; when he first set foot in Liverpool, hadn't a change of clothes to his back ; carried all he had in the world in a bag over his shoulder—and see what he died worth ! Fiat ! Hem !—yes—did it, didn't he, to some purpose ? Took care of himself, shrewd, sensible man ! when they wouldn't give him credit for a loaf because he hadn't shaved himself for six weeks, and was hungry. *Fiat!* he said ; and—it's a fact—before that day ten years he entertained the town mayor and corporation at dinner.” *

It was a story that always so excited Mr. Lyons, that Faith was sure, when he told it, which he sometimes did in his talkative, rambling moods, how he was feeling at the moment—anything but as contented as he appeared to be with his own baseless tenets. But think and feel what she might, Faith gave patient heed to all he said to her ; but for which she would have lost that hold of him which none had over him but herself, because, when vexed or troubled, to whom could he go, but to her, with those burthened hearts'-full, for counsel and comfort ? young as Rachel, his daughter, was, and scrupulously avoiding, as he now did, everything that could mar her happiness. For well he knew how unhappy

it had made her more than once when he had unguardedly given utterance, in her presence, to any of those free-thinking sentiments of his which he usually reserved for his housekeeper's ear alone, when inclined for dispute. They always saddened Rachel greatly. For they brought to mind the many distressing scenes she had been witness to, when a child, between her father and mother; and how her "dear, darling mamma, used to take her on her lap, as soon as her father was gone, and talk to her, with tears in her eyes, of the Great Giver of all things, and how those only were truly good and happy in this world who placed their trust in Him."

Faith was no match for her master in argument; or, rather, there was no argument she could use that had any chance against his crushing fatalisms. He would calmly listen to her to the end, though every word she said curled his lip with the "pity" he felt for her, and then would knock it all down with a blow by the old question—

"Do you believe in what you preach?"

"In God's omniscience? Yes."

"That, literally, 'not a sparrow falls but with His fore-knowledge?' "

"True."

"Then He also knows when you and I shall fall ?
That is but reasonable."

"Quite."

"And His decrees are immutable?"

"Yes—and just."

"How avert or avoid them, then, if we would ?
If He knows when you will die—you *will* die then,
won't you?"

"I am not competent to argue it."

"So it seems—humph!—argument!—it admits
of none."

"It needs none—that my reason tells me."

"Hem—your *reason*?—given you for what?"

"To discriminate between good and evil—between
what makes me happy or otherwise."

"Hem—and how can you do that, if you are not
a free agent?"

"I am."

"How?"

"So"—and she sat down, and rose again.

He smiled.

"I will do it again"—and she did it.

"Hem—mighty clever—call that free-agency?"

"What do you call it, sir?"

"Obeying the ruling impulse, which, if obeyed,
rules you—nothing else."

“And if not?”

“There’s no effect, because there’s no cause—you don’t do it, that’s enough.”

And thus settled, Faith, to avoid further words, which usually ended in plunging him into the glooms all day, would escape from him. And when she encountered him again, she would be so gay and lively, that, whatever the mood he was in, he could not but acknowledge that she had “a very effectual way of wheedling him over; which solely resulted from the simple reason that it was so fated—he *was* to be wheedled—like the sparrow that *was* to fall, and it fell.”

How was Faith to deal with “strange ways” like these? And the difficulty was the greater, because she knew Mr. Lyons was in earnest. He had proved *that* by the way he had shortened his exemplary wife’s days by his irreligious contempt for all that was most precious to her. Her gentle spirit sank under it; but she died praying for him. Faith’s task was no easy one. But she had voluntarily taken it on herself, and would go through with it to the best of her power. Mixed up with which were probably some personal feelings, which, if not wholly unselfish, were natural enough, and such as, if he suspected them, he could not blame

her for. At all events, she knew too well in what lay any present or future influence she might have over him, to defeat the only chance she had with him, by lessening, through any weakness of her own, the interest he felt in her, kept up far more as it was by his astonishment at her self-command than his admiration of her in any shape.

“Past errors were past, the only atonement for which could be in the future ; and that wholly depended on the use, wise or otherwise, that she made of the present.” It was a stern compact Faith entered into with herself when she yielded to the father’s entreaties that she would take charge of his child, and, as far as possible, supply the place of a mother to her, and she would “sacredly fulfil it.” From that hour Faith was bound by a solemn vow to Heaven, “come what might, to look at Angelo Lyons in no light but as her master, or her husband.” She best knew how true, or how false, were the accusations that took her from him to live with Mr. Oliver Boys. She knew for certain that she had laid herself open to grave suspicions ; but seemingly her excellent conduct at Antigua had outlived them, and obtained her a reputation that spoke for itself, and left her nothing to fear from her enemies. Though guiltless, she had been “very indiscreet ;”

and "time should shew how she could outlive that stigma, too, in a way more flattering to herself than running away from the struggle, because of its perils. In short, she *would* enter his service—she *would* take charge of his child, and be unto her a mother, as far as she could. Yes, and prove to him that he had formed a very mistaken estimate of Faith Lincoln, if he supposed—fascinatingly handsome as he knew she had always thought him—that there was any way he could ever make her amends for what she had suffered for him, *but one*. Failing which, she was still Faith Lincoln, and must be true to herself. *Fiat* was his motto; and *Fiat* should be hers, in a case where it especially behoved her to do faithfully and unfalteringly what had to be done, be the result to herself what it might."

Against his infidelities Faith was powerless to contend, except in such a way as, by opportunely shewing him, if she could, how unhappy they made him, carried that sort of not disagreeable conviction with it, which, curl his lip in derision at it as he would, she could see had the effect of restraining him from giving speech to them in his daughter's presence, whose unclouded happiness was his chief thought from morning to night. Evidently the father had not sufficient confidence in his own creed

to care to make it his child's. He held his breath when she was by, lest he should sully her joy. It was a powerful weapon in Faith's hands, used with address; in fact, the only one that, while yielding to, he serenely smiled on, as though he could afford *thus* to be vanquished. And Faith made the most of it. "Hush!" she would say to him, admonitorily, when his voice rose beyond its usual quiet musical key, while proving to her what a fool she was to argue with him—"what would Miss Rachel think if she heard you?"

Sweet girl! Rachel little knew the important part she was destined to act in the dark drama that had to be played out by her beneath the roof she then thought so splendid! ere, irrespective of all creeds or conclusions, was brought to light wherein and whereby His law omnipotent, the *law of laws*, would be vindicated, surely, thoroughly, triumphantly vindicated, though all the cunning and cleverness of hell itself were leagued against it. And well she did not know. Nor, with all his deep-seeing, dreamt Angelo Lyons, her father, of the angel of goodness his child—the image of her sainted mother—was fated to be—"lovely, short-lived, fragile, flower only," as he called her, "born to sweetly bud, and blossom, and when its fleeting day was over—die."

"Yes, as did her heaven-minded mother," Faith would feel herself urged, by duty, to reply; "for a life in comparison with which this is but a moment of preparatory, painful, precarious existence, at best. That 'beautiful bud,' as you call her, with her yearning soul ever looking upward to the *happy home*, as she says, 'where the angels have taken her dear, darling mamma, to live for ever,'—to die like the soulless beasts that perish? Oh, no, you don't mean it! Every evidence, every instinct of one's nature, proves the contrary."

"Hem—evidence—instinct of one's nature—whose nature?"

"Mine—yours—everybody's."

"Mine don't prove anything of the sort."

"It does!"

"Hem—polite—you ought to know."

"I know you claim a better end for your child, if not for yourself, than the dog's out there."

"If not for *myself*!" rising, with livid lips, as if stung by it, though no sting was intended.

"You often say you value life only for *her* sake."

"True."

"You would do anything in your power for her happiness?"

"Of course."

"And not willingly breathe a word in her presence, to mar it."

"Natural enough."

"You would not talk to her as you do to me. It would make her wretched. Why?"

"Because it would. All her 'instincts,' as you call them, go the other way. But I may be right for all that. The difference of organization, that's all."

"You know you are wrong, sir; you know that you would rather suffer death this moment than have her pure soul polluted by any such poison."

At which he would stop short in his moody measurement of the room from corner to corner, and fixing his piercing black eyes on her, seem for a moment or two in two minds whether to resent it or treat it with scorn.

"Poison!"

"If not, why so carefully withhold it from her? Why keep it only for me? Because you know it won't hurt me. I give you credit for that. You trust to the antidote I have for it. Yes, yes. Thank you! My age and *experiences*," emphasizing it, "will save *me*. But you are more tender with the beautiful young bud, all your own; and you need be. The air everywhere else is pestilential

enough for the young buds and blossoms, without bringing it home. You will not let it breathe on your innocent, lovely young flower, if you can help it; you would burn it out of your own lips, first, before you would kiss her, as her father, if it were there. What does it prove?"

"Hem! You have a tongue."

"Too free a one, perhaps, sir, when I lose all patience."

"Means well, no doubt. Go on."

"I was but going to add, sir, that you know Miss Rachel, like her mother, is piously disposed?"

"And will lose nothing by Faith Lincoln? Hem! so it seems."

"I hope not. I was going to say, by her new young friend, Jane Rosse."

"Hem—the vicar's daughter—pious also?" and though his lips curled, his eyes brightened as he said it, as if it gave him joy.

"Yes; but always so gay and happy—such a sweet disposition!"

"Hem—amiable—easily pleased?"

"She is all you could wish for, as a companion for Miss Lyons."

"Hem—that's right."

"And they seem so fond of each other!"

“Hem—do they? Neither been duped yet.”

“It is so essential for girls of their age to have good companions.”

“Hem—got them, haven’t they?”

“They will be a great acquisition to each other. Gay and grave, with girls, always match best in the end. You have made this a splendid place! but one can’t call Greystone House a gay one? Miss Rosse makes it all life and smiles when she comes; which is so good for Miss Rachel, who, like her mamma, wants drawing out before you can tell what a dear, noble girl she is; though so meek and quiet, and apt, perhaps, to be a little too grave.”

“Hem—what’s o’clock?”—which, with the deep-drawn breath that accompanied it, on the evening in question, being Mr. Lyons’ usual signal that he could talk no more, Faith left him to ruminate at leisure on what she had said to him with such freedom; nothing doubting but that it would find its way to his convictions safe enough, when no eye but One was looking on at the struggle.

CHAPTER IX.

WAS MR. ANGELO LYONS THE UNBELIEVER HE SEEMED ?

It must not be supposed from the conversation between Mr. Lyons and Faith Lincoln in the foregoing chapter, that Angelo Lyons was, constitutionally, either churlish or sullen. He was neither, by the law of his nature. But there were times when he was both, apparently ; and then, perhaps, more than at any others, was he belying himself.

No doubt he stood for what he really was in his housekeeper's eyes, so far as his natural temperament went ; which, though sometimes moody almost to moroseness when alone with her, was mixed up with so much that was delightful, if it went with the whim, as well as dark, that it encouraged her to use a freedom of speech with him, when provoked, which, otherwise, she would not have dared to employ. At all events, he was never so angry with

her for "that tongue of hers," as he called it, but that he let her "go on;" which, woman-like, taking as the best of all proofs that he knew she was right, what hopes she drew from it were best known to herself. Among which was no doubt the sincere belief that, in taking so much pains for him, she was as solicitous for his happiness as she was for her own.

As a boy, Angelo Lyons had early manifested such impatience under scholastic restraint, that he was twice convicted of lampooning the clerical characters of the masters, and flogged no end of times for shirking 'prayers,' and profaning the sabbaths. But it did him no good. It only set his subtle wits to work all the more to avenge himself. Till out came a series of Biblical pen and ink caricatures, at once so clever and scandalous, that the whole school was concerned in it, for their own sakes, to give up the culprit—and Master Lyons paid the penalty, no slight one, without flinching. It well scourged him; but made him popular. It redoubled his thirst for revenge. But it would ill become these pages to narrate at length how he next got his back bared for the rod. He began, this time, with verse the first of the first chapter of Genesis; and went through that Book, and the next, and the next, with his

humble "etchings," as he called them. Till the place getting too hot to hold him, he gave a 'splendid cold feed' to the select few who stuck to him; and having undergone next day's stinging 'rod in pickle,' like a martyr, saved the authorities the painful necessity of expelling him, by throwing himself into his mother's arms one evening when she least expected him, and shewing her such terrible stripes on his poor back, "got," he told her, "for *Truth's* sake," as what tender mother could have gazed at unmoved? Certainly not Angelo Lyons's.

"And from that day I never looked again into a Bible," he would tell Faith, with flashing eyes. "What I might have done, if they hadn't flogged it out of me, I don't know. Gone on dutifully, believing all I was told, may be. Then how wise I should have been! Spare the rod, and spoil the boy, eh? Not they! Beat it into me! What? Truth? Curious that! Not a fellow hardly among us but hated chapel-bell. Might do anything rather than shirk that. Why didn't we like it? Why want to beat it into us till we did? Truth! Hem! always in such fear of itself. Oughtn't to be, ought it?"

With what Faith said in answer to which, we need not concern ourselves. Probably it was common-

place enough, as any answer she could make him must have been, based on the old story of "human frailties and infirmities," and their "unfortunate proneness to prefer, unless strictly guarded and governed what was pleasant to what was profitable, in things eternal as well as earthly."

It is possible to have no religion, and yet be a very polished, fascinating member of society. Infidels are not necessarily uncouth, or mean, or disagreeable. On the contrary, it seems as if nature had been at some considerable pains in their formation, to make them often very charming persons. "Highly gifted," is an expression frequently applied to sceptics and scoffers. And so they often are ; being preternaturally endowed in many instances with such wonderful skill and acumen, added to their other engaging qualifications, that the superhuman heights to which they can soar, as well as the profound depths to which they can dive, may well astonish the weak minds of those simple, contented, credulous folks, who, though their consciences forbid them to do likewise, cannot but stare, and wonder, and acknowledge how "immensely clever they are, and acute !"

People said the same of Mr. Angelo Lyons—how wonderfully well-read he was ! how ingenious ! how

greatly gifted ! what an eye he had to see to the bottom of things !”

He was immensely rich, too, which detracted nothing from his merits ; nay, gave his words a weight which he himself would have scarcely hoped to obtain for them, had he been as poor in pocket as the Vicar, his parish pastor, was ; whose morning sermons he made it a point of attentively listening to with his daughter and her governess every Sunday. Not that the good christian folks of St. Luke’s manifested any impatience under their pastor’s orthodox sermons, no such thing ; but they certainly gave extraordinary ear to words from the rich man’s lips, which had the Reverend Roland Rosse, their minister, let fall from the pulpit, would have lost him his gown.

And probably Angelo Lyons plumed himself on it. He saw how he was greedily listened to and applauded ; when, “had he been as poor as their spotless pastor, who had their souls in his hands, they would have hissed him to scorn.” It tallied with his contempt for them ; with what he knew they would think and say of him, in all probability, if they saw him with the eyes with which he looked at himself.

Was Angelo Lyons the unbeliever he seemed to be ? If so, “how was it,” as Faith Lincoln asked him,

“it never angered him to see his child delightedly reading the pious books Jane Rosse brought her from the vicarage? Why, too, did he so suddenly and sedulously hush his voice, if she came into the room when he was talking in a way he knew would grieve her? Or why, if he approached the chamber where she was at her prayers, or singing, with Jane, the hymns for the next Sabbath, did he stop and listen with rooted attention till their voices ceased? And then when she came to say ‘good night,’ kiss her so fondly, so fervently, while her arms were round his neck, as she used to always twine them round her mother’s, before she laid her head on her pillow?” And could not Faith see how he strove to belie his better nature by those battles the determined spirit was having with itself, to conceal from her how profoundly it affected him? He joined them not in their evening prayers, nor songs of praise; he neither prayed nor sang with them, as a father might have done; but it seemed he watched for the times to steal softly up stairs from his library, if unobserved, to hearken to their voices. Perhaps it had curled his lip but a little while before, to hear Faith’s glowing accounts of the “beautiful love,” as she called it, there was between the two girls; but he was near enough, nevertheless, while

they were mingling their souls together, in token of their joy, their innocence, their happiness, not to miss a word of what they said or sang. He partook not of their feasts of love ; but it deeply thrilled him to be witness to them. He professed to have no faith in love or friendship, unless it were a parent's ; love was " a dream," he said, and friendship " a delusion ;" but Jane Rosse's cheery, gladsome little voice in the house never failed to please him ; nor was he ever tired of listening to her praises, though accompanied with such a list of beautiful new scripture stories in Rachel's lap, as soon as Jane was gone, as might well call for his best attention to do justice to, before she embraced him for it.

And it was at those times that Angelo Lyons ought to have sat for his portrait. For then he looked so handsome ; because for the moment what there was in him of God's giving touched his heart and told in his looks and voice and movements, whether he would or not. So that Faith Lincoln many a time wished she had been an artist, to have committed the pleasing impressions to canvas ; if only to have shewn him, in his ugly moods, how widely different we all of us look—even the best-favoured—when we are fairly on good terms with ourselves, than when we are not.

True, the world at large only saw Mr. Angelo Lyons in his witching moods ; so it had the advantage over Faith, in being well contented with the man as they met him face to face, and shook hands with him, and smiled or frowned with him, as the occasion called for. He was then perfect at all points. No face could have more "heart" in it, no voice more "manly kindness;" every movement was "full of unstudied grace," every look and word "the perfect gentleman," every action "a noble deed."

Miserly wealth maintains a certain sway, however sordid it is ; but Angelo Lyons's munificence was kingly ! By which, please not to infer, respected reader, that Mr. Angelo Lyons was absurdly profuse at one time and capriciously parsimonious at another. No man could be more even, as likewise more open-handed, than he was. In his nice discriminations, as to fit objects, and times, and occasions, lay much of his popularity. He gave largely, but he gave well ; he frittered away not a halfpenny uselessly ; his gifts always carried a good percentage of interest to both giver and receiver ; simultaneously with what he drew out of one pocket, he returned, so to speak, doubled, to the other ; he enriched the town he lived in ; and ere he had been one

of its magistrates and borough councilmen five years, not even Tristram Balfour in his palmiest days had the capital at command that he had.

It spoke for itself—virtue was its own reward. “The liberal soul shall be made fat,” they said to each other; “and he that watereth shall himself be also watered.”

Angelo Lyons had read the scriptures, and knew full well—

“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

Clearly what he did with his money brought it back to him tenfold:—“Everything he touched turned to gold; there was no end to his riches!”

But it may be asked, if Angelo Lyons were not the unbeliever he seemed, why have acted so contrary to his conscience?

It would have been as easy for Mr. Lyons, with his enormous wealth, to have been as orthodox, in the world's eyes, as the Archbishop of Canterbury, had he wished it. He could pay his way well, and have it swept and cleared of all obstacles which, otherwise, have woefully impeded him. Nay, the Reverend Roland Rosse himself, a good and just man, and “the soul of truth and sincerity,” they said,

deemed it not beneath him, while accepting his wealthy friend's munificent donations for his church and parish poor, to blandly smile, and cordially shake the unbeliever's hand, and "give no ear to the shocking stories told of him." Had he credited which for one moment, he must have rushed from his polluting presence, left the gold untouched, and never entered his doors again.

It curled Angelo Lyons's lip when he was gone. He had sworn to his weak, fond, foolish mother, when he shewed her the deep rod-marks on his back, "got," he told her, "for truth's sake," that he "would never look in a Bible again;" and he never had. From that day to the present it was a closed book to him; though wide open enough every morning and night to Rachel. In that he had scrupulously kept his promise to his wife on her death-bed—"whatever his own irreligious opinions might be, they should never influence his child's." Seemingly he had smarted severely for *truth's* sake, and it should smart for his. From that hour he entered into a stern, determined league with himself to be "subject only to common sense, to believe nothing but what his reason approved, and to make the first law of nature his rule." His loving wife was no longer by him to reprove him with her tears; but

his child, her image, was; and "what he had promised her, with her dying eyes on him, he would perform." It was a point of *honor* with him to do *that*; which proved he had a conscience.

It proved "more than that" to one eye and heart that narrowly watched him from morning to night—Faith Lincoln's. She had known him from boyhood; from those sunny days of promise when he would choose her out of all the other fair Tobago maidens to talk to him, and walk with him, and read and write with him, and listen to his wild stories under the cotton-trees; till he persuaded her to think of only him, and "what a day of bliss inconceivable it would be when they were both old enough to have no consent but their own to ask, to make them happy!" Who of all who had ever studied him most, knew him as well as Faith did? And, yet, with all her knowledge of him, who knew but herself the painful days and nights she had spent, vainly trying to explain it to herself "why it was he was always struggling so, in spirit? struggling, as was manifest enough to her, against his own convictions?"

She had often heard of 'the poor, bruised back,' and of his vow to avenge it; but that did not account for it. They were wounds too small to take so long to heal. He had healed far worse than

those. Yes, and could and would have cured those also, but for some hidden, inexplicable motive of his own she could not fathom. "What need had he to dissimulate, to so falsify himself? The 'poor bruised back' was sound and well again; nay, for that, he owned he had deserved it, and that he 'forgave old Bull, the Doctor, with all his heart.' So *those* wounds didn't rankle much. Truth to speak, it sorely puzzled Faith; puzzled her to understand "why he so cruelly crushed in himself what he evidently sought to cultivate so carefully in his child?" Was it that he wished to be peculiar, and so to have the better pretext for the exclusive life he led? or that he took a pleasure in exciting people's wonder, for amusement? He was a strange being! His friends and neighbours gladly gathered round him in public, where he threw off all reserves; but in private, even among those he liked most, he was cold and distant; unless when particularly disposed to be agreeable, and then he displayed powers of pleasing, the more captivating because they were rather the spontaneous outbursts, apparently, of a warm heart and well-stored mind, than drawn from him, of necessity, or from any premeditated desire of his own to shine.

It seemed most consonant with her knowledge of

his character, as far as Faith could judge, that her first impression was the correct one, viz., "that his peculiar opinions," as people termed them, gave him the pretext he wanted for the eccentric life he led. Out and at home he was not the same individual. Out, he was all cheerfulness and ease and urbanity; at home, grave and care-worn—though rolling in riches—and scarcely ever at rest, or with a smile on his face. So that Faith would jokingly tell him sometimes that "he reserved his best looks for others;" when he would rouse himself and run on with a succession of such wit and pleasantry, that she was startled to think "how little she knew of his versatile powers of mind, with all her knowledge of him, and what he could be in a moment if he pleased."

Faith read him pretty correctly; but not deeply enough, as yet, to see deeper than he chose that she should. It was true that it suited his views to be "strange." It was a word he always smiled to hear himself called. It tickled the whim to a *t*. It left him in quiet possession of his own; and as his kingly gifts rather increased than diminished, he became "stranger and stranger." "What more could the town want than a man like Mr. Lyons was, with his hand always in his pocket for it? which proved,

didn't it, what a thorough good heart he must have?"

But where a keen-seeing, clever, circumspect woman like Faith Lincoln is determined to attain her end, great indeed must be the difficulties to defeat her. And so thought Mr. Lyons, perhaps, at those moments when, more anxious to read the riddle that so sorely puzzled her than to veil her thoughts from him, the chances are he saw through her, with all her circumspection, a great deal clearer than she saw through him. Still, she was Faith Lincoln; and whether she could or could not attain to the knowledge of what her heart panted for more than any other earthly thing—"time would shew."

Is Faith Lincoln the only ambitious woman in the world who has flattered herself that "if she could get the object of her affections in her power, he would be hers?"

Her interest in Mr. Lyons was great; old memories could not be shut out; he had always told her more of his mind than any one else; and it piqued her curiosity to conceive why he should wear two faces to her on a subject about which she could see no need, on his part, for disguise or reserve. For she felt sure there *was* something hidden from her, when he indulged in "those dark moods and sullen

fits, so contrary to his nature." His impatience under her eye proved it. All the time he was striving to appear so calm and self-assured, he was acting a part, or she was greatly mistaken. And she could see that he knew she suspected it, which convinced her that there were grounds for her doubts. Had there been none, he would not have lost his temper, which he often did when arguing with her ; whereas, happen what might to ruffle him, before he became so rich, he passed it off with as little care or concern, apparently, as he would have brushed a fly from his face. Clearly, he was not treating her with his former candour ; and it was not in Faith Lincoln's nature to determine on the necessity for knowing the reason why, without good reason for it.

In short, there was an increasing mystery about Mr. Lyons, when at home, apart from his customary thoughtfulness and disinclination for much talk, unless the theme were pleasant to him, that caused Faith Lincoln more watchful days and wakeful nights than she communicated to any one. As towards herself, personally, he was the same as he had ever been since she entered his service to take charge of Miss Lyons—universally kind. Nay, she owed it to her own stern determination to religiously observe the discreet rules she had laid down for

herself, on becoming a member of his household, that he was not kinder to her than he was. But, withal, his manner was not quite the same towards her, or she fancied that it was not, since they came to live in Shiphampton; though nothing could exceed his generosity to her, or his seeming desire to make her happy. The change was altogether in his manner—not in tone or action. He was not so easy and unstudied with her as he used to be; he thought more before he spoke; and if he suddenly raised his eyes to hers when she was trying to unravel him, they would fall on his hands, and there remain fixed on them; till brisking up, he would get so gay and chatty, that it brought old times back again; which never failed to make them both so blithe, that she forgot everything but “how handsome and interesting he undoubtedly still was above all men she had ever seen.”

Though it never would have been easy to say of what creed Angelo Lyons was, he had so far studied his amiable and exemplary wife's happiness as to shock her as little as possible with his crushing fatalisms. What he did avow of them troubled her enough, without adding aught to them; but since her death, and especially since his accession to the Balfour property, all his old-hated school-history

seemed to have revived with tenfold intensity, and the startling latitudes he now gave himself knew no bounds.

Faith was puzzled to account for it. Indeed, there was now more necessity than ever for the father to look well unto his ways for the sake of his child. While her pious mother was her shield, and guide, and guardian, it mattered less how he willingly left Rachel entirely to her care; but now he was her only parent—the sole earthly being she looked up to for her daily rule of conduct; and loving her tenderly, as he did, it might well rack Faith's brains to make out how it was he went such an extraordinary way to prove it. True, her presence hushed him in a moment, when he was giving utterance to what he knew would sadden her; but Rachel was an observing girl, and pondered over, and took things none the less deeply to heart because she was dutifully loving, and obedient, and pure-minded. She had seen her mother weep when in conversation with her father, and it had drawn her, child-like, all the closer to her side; but he was her father; and then she was too young to understand why it was he and her dear, darling mamma, so often disagreed. Now he only studied how to make her happy; and “how beautiful he was!

every one said, "how good! how generous!—how proud she ought to be of him!"

"Yes," communed Faith with herself; "and so am I; so we all are! And, though it gratifies him, he curls his lip at it; sneers at what sounds pleasanter to his ear than all the jingling of his money; spurns with one eye what the other sparkles at; scorns, seemingly, what he most covets; throws away what he has just given thousands for; wants, and don't want; will have, and won't have! And, why? There must be a reason. 'Simple enough,' he would say—'cause and effect—that's all.' True! Some cause there must be—must!" and then relapsing into deep thought, there was little doubt, by the smile that presently came in place of the cloud on her brow, while her needle went on mechanically with its work, but that Faith Lincoln had too good an opinion of her own powers to regard as unattainable anything she had determined to do, which could be done if she would.

One thing Faith was resolved to effect, and which, during her many musings on the subject, she wrought herself into the belief that it was her duty to spare no pains to accomplish, for Mr. Lyons's sake as well as her own, viz., to unravel the meaning of his "changed manner" to her since they came to

Greystone House ; which assumed so strange an appearance, sometimes, when he was in his restless moods, that there was no knowing how it might end, unless she came to the bottom of it. Some said “there was no doubt he would marry again”—and Faith bit her lip,—“as soon as he saw a woman to please him, and who would be a second mother to Rachel.” But if it pained her to think of it, she still smiled—smiled as though she either disbelieved it, or had her own private reasons for crushing the thought.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH MR. LYONS ENGAGES AN UNEXCEPTION-
ABLE GOVERNESS FOR HIS DAUGHTER; AND IS
COAXED BY RACHEL INTO DOING SOMETHING
THAT SENDS JANE ROSSE SCAMPERING OVER THE
HOUSE LIKE A MAD GIRL.

MR. LYONS had been to London to shew Rachel the sights there, and find a governess for her.

He took her to dinners, and he took her to balls; but she shone but little at either of them, except for her beauty, and her rich papa, and the splendid fortune she was heiress to. In company, Rachel Lyons was not animated. She could be scarcely so called at any time. Even with her bosom friend, Jane Rosse, there was such a pensive seriousness in her usual look and tone, that it got her many a good laugh from Jane, who was all brightness and gaiety, and never so pleased as when

she could make her “darling little Grave-as-a-judge, Rachel,” as she called her, as gay and happy as herself.

But Rachel’s exceeding loveliness was the theme of every tongue where her father took her. And when it transpired what an enormous fortune she would have some day, if Mr. Lyons did not marry again, it little mattered whether she was animated or as dull as a post, when it was in every mouth “how rich she would be!—what a splendid match for somebody!”

Which being the last thought in Rachel’s mind, she showed herself off at the brilliant assemblies she was present at, by no means to advantage. That is to say, she was perfectly natural; though certainly not as much at her ease as she would have been at the good Vicar of Shiphampton’s quiet parsonage, or in her own pretty boudoir, at home, with Jane Rosse. And so being, was at no pains—however it might have improved her in the courtly eyes of May Fair and Belgravia—to appear otherwise than as she felt, greatly pleased with, and fully sensible of, the kindnesses shown her, but with her heart evidently elsewhere, however her beautiful blue eyes might be smiling their astonishment rather than their delight at it all.

And when alone with her father again, he would ask her "how she liked London?"

"To live in it?" she would reply, fondly looking up in his face, as she settled herself on a hassock at his feet and got as close as she could to him. "It would depend, papa dear, on what I had to do."

He smiled.

"I should not like it at all, without plenty to do—I should feel so dull."

"Plenty of parties and pleasure-taking?"

"Oh, papa, no!"

"What else do London young ladies think of? And what else would you"—smoothing back her golden hair off her forehead—"with those pretty features, and a rich, fond, foolish father to give you all you asked?"

"Oh, papa! how can you talk in that way? You don't mean it."

Which was true. He had said it to hear what she would answer, and to note the beautiful blue eyes looking up at him fill with tears; as it reminded him perhaps of her mother, of those gone for ever days when, before he lost her, Angelo Lyons never thought of her worth.

"How so, Miss Conjuror?"

"You say sometimes I am so like poor dear mamma?"

"You are!"

"Then, papa, you must know better than that parties and pleasure-takings would make me happy. Did they make her happy? Oh, no! And they don't make me so. They make me feel—oh, I can't tell you how, papa dear—so different to what Jane Rosse feels."

"How is that?"

"So delighted, she says, when she is going to a dance or a pic-nic, that she could jump for joy."

"Jump for joy!"

"And it's true! She scampers about the house as if she were out of her wits."

"Indeed!—and can't get little Miss Grave-as-a-judge to move an inch? How perverse of you."

"Papa dear."

"Well."

"You may be equally happy, may you not, when you are grave as when you are gay?"

"Certainly."

"It depends, don't it, papa, on"—

"Turn of mind? Yes."

"So I tell Jane. But what do you think she says? That I take after *you*."

"After me?"

"Yes—and that that's the reason I won't race

about with her, because you are not gay, and she can't think why."

"Not gay—and she can't think why? Hem—and then you have a race?"

"Indeed no! And she don't want me. Jane is not that sort of girl. You can't think, papa, how generous she is! I am much more selfish than Jane is. I won't race about with her if I can help it; but she will sit hours with me, if I ask her, working, or reading, or talking, or doing something, without a murmur; when I know she would give the world to jump up, if I would, and drag me all over the house. Don't you call that kind, papa dear? I am not near so generous! What makes her always so light-hearted? Her mind, is it not?"

"What gave you that fair, white skin, and my negroes in Trinidad their black ones? Or Jane Rosse her dark-brown locks, and you these golden ones?"

"Oh, yes! But nature had nothing to do, had it, papa dear, with our dispositions, as they *now are*? You can bend a young tree, you know, into almost any form you please?"

"But if a peach-tree, it won't yield pears or pomegranates, bend it how you will."

"No! But you will improve its fruit, won't you, papa, by culture? Make it nicer, I mean?"

“The more you make it bear, the sooner it will die; the better the fruit, the worse for the root, they say.”

“Oh, papa, what a way to look at it! How sad it makes you! It does me, when I hear you talk so.”

“It need not—it ought not—long life may be no boon.”

“Then why do we all wish for it so? We should not, should we, if it were wrong for us to do so?”

“Better we did not in most instances. Life is sweet because death is bitter. So they say. Many, too, who have the least cause.”

“Oh! but it must be right to wish to live; or how would dear, darling mamma, who was such an angel, have feared to die? Think of that, papa!”

“Kiss me, and say good night; or—out every night in this way till morning—where will all the roses be soon?”

It sent her to bed. But it was quite true the ‘roses’ were fast fading that she brought with her from Shiphampton; and glad enough was Rachel when told by her father that he had engaged a governess for her, and that before another eight and forty hours she would be with Jane Rosse again.

It had been no easy matter, the finding a gover-

ness for Rachel, to her father's satisfaction. It was not every qualified applicant for that important trust that would suit Mr. Lyons. He wanted what was oftener offered than obtained, a really qualified person who could fulfil what she undertook, and in so doing would not be a 'martyr.' "He meant to treat her as a lady ought always to be treated by a gentleman, and to amply remunerate her for her services; but he must hear nothing of inability, or a soul above its station. Her home would be happy or otherwise, in a great measure, according to how she herself made it one or the other. If she had no fear of herself, she need have none of any one else; as long as her duties were done as they ought to be, she might have every thing else her own way; the bargain was of her own making, and she must abide by the conditions thereof."

Having made which clearly understood by Miss Falconbridge, who had no less keen a perception of what was "properly due to herself in such matters than to her pupils," Mr. Lyons devoted the last two days of their stay in London to taking Rachel to St. Paul's, and The British Museum, and The National Gallery; and, as a last treat, to a Grand Handel Oratorio in Exeter Hall.

They were accompanied to it by Miss Falcon-

bridge; and "spent the most delightful evening," Rachel assured her new governess, "that she had passed since they left home."

Nor seemingly was Mr. Lyons less pleased with the acquisition he had secured for his daughter, in Florence Falconbridge, than was Rachel herself. It was a most satisfactory termination to what had caused him no little anxiety—how to find all those most needed qualifications in one person which were so especially important in Rachel's case, left motherless as she was, and without brother or sister. It had been a subject, too, of such speculation in Shiphampton, as to the sort of person Mr. Lyons would choose for his daughter's companion and instructress combined, that it greatly gratified him to think he had succeeded so well; and, as may be supposed, no little interest accompanied Miss Falconbridge's arrival at Greystone House. An event by no means diminished in attraction by Miss Lyons's glowing accounts of her; and its transpiring "what an extremely lady-like person she was, and good-looking, and nice-mannered; though with a dignity of deportment that seemed a little stiff, at first sight, and severe."

In truth, Mr. Lyons had good cause to congratulate himself. He had well weighed it, and knew

what he wanted, when on his arrival in London he advertised in the morning papers. It brought qualified applicants enough, but only one with the qualifications indispensable for the home Mr. Lyons offered. Miss Florence Falconbridge was the one chosen out of the thirty-seven politely declined, many of whom were far better looking and sweeter-speeched than Miss Florence Falconbridge, if Mr. Angelo Lyons had only had an eye to exteriors. Indeed, Florence Falconbridge was not all pretty. In some positions, especially if her dark grey eyes were illumined by anything that pleased or angered her, there was just a chance of your calling her handsome; decidedly favoured as her face was by its lofty forehead, and Roman nose, and classically-cut cheeks and lips, that gave to her ordinary appearance the evidences of a high mind and cultivated intellect. And the way she wore her almost black hair in tight, short bands, leaving her small well shaped ear and queenly neck to add what they could to the supposition of the blue blood she sprang from, heightened the impression. Her figure also was commanding; which perhaps gave it that appearance of "stiffness" which rather chilled Rachel when she first saw her. It did not so strike Mr. Lyons. He saw in it only what it arose from, rather a sincere pride in her

vocation than anything put on for appearance-sake, or silly self-indemnity. Evidently Florence Falconbridge was not ashamed of what she was doing. Nay, she was proud of it !

“ It is your pleasure, then,” smiled Mr. Lyons, “ to take charge of my daughter on the terms stated ? ”

“ Yes—and my *pride* also.”

It was the key to it all. It was exactly what Mr. Lyons desired to find for his child—“ a governess who *was* a governess, and *wished to be* one, and *would be* one after she was engaged as well as before.”

Of course it got wind, “ what a superior person Miss Falconbridge was ; and how fortunate Mr. Lyons had been ; and now how very different for Miss Lyons Greystone House would be.”

There was quite a stir about it in Shiphampton ; nothing else was talked of for nine days. And then so far from its abating, the curiosity to know who was to be asked to the ‘ house-warming,’ proposed by Lady Thornhill, and enthusiastically seconded by all their friends—as the long-looked-for event so much wanted to draw Rachel Lyons from the loved quiet of her home, more out into society—got to such a pitch, that at last Faith undertook to speak

seriously to Mr. Lyons about it, the first opportunity.

Though "a strong-minded man," as people called him, Mr. Lyons, being but human, had his weak points. One of them was his sensitiveness to popular opinion. He was pretty sure of his friends, for he was rich; but this was not enough for him—he must gain over his enemies also. Of course he had his foes as well as his friends, or he would have had no merit. He expected it. But it always brightened his eyes far more to have the multitude on his side than the select few. He hated the mob; but acknowledged its power; and was the "kindest gentleman" in Shiphampton to the "great unwashed" of that busy, populous place; to do anything for whom, in the town, was a fine day's work for old, young, or middle-aged, who happened to be in luck's way. Surely Angelo Lyons must have had some sense of religion in him—fatalist and free-thinker as he was—to have so valued the suffrages of the poor? They were good tidings for him when told "how well the *people* spoke of him!" Then he would rouse himself from the contemplation of his white hands, and listen with an earnestness he never evinced even when his rich friends talked of making him their Mayor.

His homely habits, too, and devoted love for his child were in every one's mouth ; as also his " noble resolution " to reside where he was, much to his own discomfort in many respects, for the sake of the town. It was also deemed so praiseworthy of him, shewing the tender respect he did for his wife's memory, in not marrying again, unless he could insure his daughter as good a second mother by it as his first was. All applauded him for this, except those who had their own reasons for the contrary. And when came rumours of " what an unexceptionable person " he had engaged, in Miss Falconbridge, to be Miss Lyons' governess and companion, public curiosity might well be on the *qui vive* to get a sight of that gifted lady, and judge for itself what likelihood there was of her ever being Mrs. Angelo Lyons.

Mr. Lyons anticipated no less :—

" They will all be at their wits' end to mark the kind of woman I have selected for my daughter," he smiled to himself. " Hem—the very person I wanted—hem—yes—so she is—unexceptionable—undeniably so."

Angelo Lyons, Esq., held an exalted social position, and must have felt that the eye of the world was on him. Men, under " the world's eye," feel so differently. It elates some, but depresses others.

Organizations widely differ. They nerve one man with any amount of moral courage and high spirits while they fill his more sensitive or conscientious neighbour, though no less ambitious of distinction than himself, with far more anxiety than exultation. There is this comfort—the race is not, necessarily, to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; nay, the “tortoise” sometimes arrives first, they say, and the “hare” last; greatness is not always the result of high-ways; the *by*-ways lead to it no less than the *high*; so that the pace be sure and steady, it will last longest, and in the long-run often come in winner, by sheer dint of patient progress.

“It is how the finest fames and fortunes are made,” Mr. Lyons would tell the friends who expressed surprise sometimes at the pains he took about small things, “which were not worth the trouble they gave him.”

He quite differed with them. Argue he did not; for he never argued with any one but his house-keeper; and then he did it rather to amuse himself by hearing her talk, than for any gratification the sound of his own voice gave him. His friends wondered at “the deal of trouble he gave himself to please the poor—the most grasping and ungrateful creatures in the world.”

“I find it so in many instances,” admitted Mr. Lyons. But he relaxed not in his steady endeavours to do his best for them; and if street homage were any evidence of his popularity, truly if he had had no horses to his carriage when he went abroad, he could have got on very well without them by just beckoning with his little finger. It used to make Rachel almost cross sometimes to see the time her father would often spend, listening to petitions and emptying his purse; because she was no less convinced than was Faith that he was woefully imposed on. But, as it was “such a pleasure to him,” they said nothing. The money he gave away annually to the crowds that worshipped him in Shiphampton and about, would have sufficiently made a golden idol of him without the personal interest he took in its distribution; preferring always, where it was possible, to be his own almoner, which so greatly enhanced its value. Mr. Lyons would do nothing by deputy that he could do himself; it involved considerable trouble; but repaid him handsomely, as was evidenced wherever he went.

Still, Rachel thought he occasionally carried his sympathies for the people rather too far; notwithstanding the grave discourses she and Miss Falconbridge often had together about the meaning of true

charity, which was "not putting little fingers into little purses whenever came a call on them, good or bad ; but only giving when and where what she gave profited as well as pleased." In truth, Rachel's heart was touched by a piteous tale and plaintive looks as quickly as any one's ; still, she was of opinion that " dear papa occasionally troubled himself over much with what there was no need for him to so vex himself about." For, now, there was not the slightest noise or disturbance out of doors, but he could have no rest till it was inquired into, and he knew all about it ; when it had no more to do with him, or any of them, in Greystone House than the cockatoo. It was very silly of dear papa !"

He smiled at her playful chidings ; and when the hubbub was over that had called him to the window, with always a shade paler cheek than he wore the moment before, he would take her on his knee and press his lips to her forehead, and smooth down her hair in the way he liked to see it, and seem quite relieved when Faith came to say that " it was only a drunken brawl, or some poor wretch being dragged by the police to the lock-up."

" Papa, dear," Rachel would say, with an arm round his neck, " why do you concern yourself so about those rude, riotous people ? You feel for

them too much. I mean, a great deal more than many of them deserve. You don't know how bad, and sly, and selfish some of them are. Faith says they would as soon hiss and hoot you to-morrow as not, if you could give them no more."

"True. But I *can*, you see. So they don't do it."

"Oh, papa, what a way to talk!"

"A very wise one, I think."

"What—that such homage as theirs is worth having?"

"Who talked of homage?"

"If you care nothing for it, papa, why take the pains you do for them?"

"If little girls talk of what they don't understand—how then?"

"Then," with a kiss, "if you mean I am a little girl, I would have you to understand I am not! I shall be fourteen soon!"

"When I must please you all, I suppose, as have a juvenile party for my little lady?"

"Oh, yes, do, papa! Won't you?"

"I thought you cared nothing for parties?"

"Oh, yes, I do now! Miss Falconbridge says it quite right! She says I must go out more than I have done; that it isn't good for me to love staying

at home so. Though I am sure I shall never be happy any where else. Oh, papa! what a different home, isn't it, to what we thought it would be that day you first took me to see it, outside, from the road there? You can't think how cold it turned me! I cried about it all night. I couldn't help it. It did look such a dreadful place! And now it's so beautiful! But, papa dear."

"What?"

"You will let us have a dance, won't you? I told Jane Rosse I would ask you. It would make us all so gay."

"Are you so sad, then?"

"Oh, no! But—but—Miss Falconbridge has made up her mind that you will; and is going to tell you what she thinks I had better wear. She would like me and Jane to be dressed alike. Say yes, there's a dear papa!"

He kissed it on her upturned cheek, if he did not say it; and famous news it was for them all when Jane Rosse came next day, and went scampering all over the house with it like a mad girl.

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH MISS JANE ACTS THE PART OF A LITTLE
"WITCH," TO FRIGHTEN RACHEL; AND GETS
DEAR PAPA FAMOUSLY BANTERED BY THEM, IN
CONSEQUENCE.

THE fact is, in reconstructing Greystone House, Mr. Lyons had made it too large for a small family like his was. It wanted a large family to fill it. There was a hollow sound in it, and "quite an echo," they said, if you stood on the up-stairs landing, and any one was talking or walking in the hall. Indeed, so curiously distinct was it, when the wind blew from the water, that Miss Jane and Miss Rachel would send each other up and down, for the fun of holding sepulchral conversations together in as ghost-like voices as possible; till scared out of their wits by it, away they would race back to Faith, or Miss Falconbridge, if she happened to be in a fit-

ting mood, and stoutly stick to it that "the house *was* haunted."

They knew better than to run to "dear papa" with their "rubbish," after the trouncings they had got more than once, when, at first, they used to rush in to him with their pale faces, and hardly able to articulate with the fright they were in.

"Humph!" he would say, looking up from the paper or book he was reading, and stamping his foot—"nonsense!—rubbish!—get away with you!"

It set Miss Jane "scampering for her life;" but once Rachel stood firm for a moment, with the door a-jar, for a precipitate escape in case of need.

"Go! go!" stamped her father; "or I'll ghost you both presently."

"If you doubt it, dear papa," parlied Rachel, "come and listen."

"Get along with you!"

"Do papa, dear! just for once."

He stared hard at her; but she kept her ground. Evidently she was flesh and blood of his own; and for half a minute he seemed as if he had forgotten all about the ghost, in his mingled surprise and admiration at her firmness.

It gave her courage.

"It won't hinder you three minutes, papa dear,

she continued, "to come upon the top-landing; and I'll shew you where to stand. Why won't you? Do, papa!"

He did. He could give no reason why he should not. So passively following the pretty mulberry-spotted muslin frock that went before him upstairs, there they were, in a minute, on the top-landing, looking wistfully at each other, waiting for Jane.

But Miss Jane came not.

"You frightened her back to Faith," explained Rachel; "you stamped so hard at us. Never mind! Stay quiet till the wind gets up again, and then you will hear it. Hark!"

There was an indistinct, creeping sound, as the wind whistled and moaned along the passage where they were standing; but it died away the next moment; and though it was not long after sunset, the house was as still and noiseless as though it had been midnight.

"Not a very polite ghost," smiled Mr. Lyons, "to keep us waiting."

"Have patience," advised Rachel.

There was no help for it; and "dear papa" steadied himself by grasping the mahogany baluster and looking down into the hall, as he was told to do.

But the wind whistled and moaned no more ; there was a dead calm, as if on purpose to disappoint them.

"How provoking!" said Rachel.

But Mr. Lyons was in no hurry. His gaze was now on the beautiful painted passage-window facing him, there placed by Tristram Balfour, to please Aunt Joyce, who was a great lover of stained glass with scripture stories on it, and saints and angels. The day was fast declining ; but it was a brilliant, glowing evening, and enough light was yet on the window to show its masterly character, and the high finish of its several clever designs to represent the human figure with more fidelity and effect than is customary with works of that class. One face in particular was especially excellent, that of a kneeling woman at the feet of the Virgin Mother ; the strong resemblance of the features and expression of which to Ann Balfour's, when she was Ann Boys, was its chief charm in Aunt Joyce's eyes. It was a striking likeness of poor Ann ; and, doubtless, so struck Mr. Lyons more forcibly than ever that evening, brought face to face with him as it thus was, with just the sombred light on it to display it well.

But Rachel's thoughts were most on "How provoking it was that the wind had ceased when

only five minutes before it sighed and moaned so, it was piteous to hear it." And her mind's eye was vaguely wandering from "the ghost" to "what a dreadful end it was for poor Ann Balfour to come to!" when clutching her father by the arm—"Hark" she said, sinking her voice almost to a whisper, as a passing dark cloud gradually veiled poor Ann's placid face from their gaze,—simultaneously with which—as the wind whistled again up the stair-case—distinctly as living lips could have uttered them, to be audible—

"Speak, sister, speak! Is the deed done?" asked a strange, melancholy voice from below; and up it came echoing to the roof—"Is the deed done?—done?—done?" till even Angelo Lyons' philosophy was no match for it, to judge by his livid cheeks for an instant or two; though, while going down again, he made fine fun of it, and of how, when he caught that audacious Miss Jane, he would "teach her to read Shakspeare somewhat better than that."

It got Miss Jane a sound lecture from Faith, on the "bad taste" she had shewn in treating so serious, so solemn a subject with levity. "It was not well done of you," said Faith; "it was very unseemly, very indecorous, Miss Jane."

Miss Jane hung her head.

"Yes, I know it was wrong," she granted; "but I couldn't help it. We had been reading Macbeth, you know, and the Witch's speech occurred to me all of a moment when I saw them from the drawing-room going up-stairs. It was to frighten Rachel. Hadn't we been talking of ghosts?"

"At all events," put in Rachel, "dear papa turned as pale as ashes; so it is no use for him to say he don't believe in them;" and famously the girls bantered him for it.

Irreligious persons are usually superstitious; and so was Angelo Lyons. It would have curled his lip if you had told him so; because it would have amused him to see you gave him credit for any religion at all. Of religious scruples or any unnecessary fears, in consequence, he had none; for this "rite," or for that "practice," he cared not a straw; for "over-accuracies," or "timid doubts," or "blind beliefs," he had only smiles and pity; and at the idea of morality having anything to do with the soul's salvation, he laughed outright—so how could he be superstitious?

He was very much so, nevertheless, as will be seen before the close of the story; he was so from his birth; his parents were so before him; it was in his

blood and bone as well as theirs ; he had sucked it in with his mother's milk ; and up to manhood had been nursed and nurtured in the very lap of it, or he had been no West Indian. His great-great-grandmother was all but a pure African ; after which the native blood was largely purified ; till it became quite pure with the birth of Angelo ; though of that almost gipsy-caste which favoured the belief that Mr. Angelo Lyons had Spanish blood in him, which he never troubled himself to contradict, if he heard it said of him. His features also were rather Spanish or Italian, than English ; and there had been known times when so terrible had been his temper in Tobago and Trinidad, when enraged, that it was difficult to suppose he had any but the savagest African blood in him, when roused.

If the African negroes were "devoid of all natural religion," in Mr. Lyons' forefathers' times, as some assert, unquestionably all or nearly all of them in the West Indies believed in a Supreme Being. All trustworthy accounts of them place this beyond a doubt. Nay, they also admitted the existence of an Evil Principle ; they had the fear of a hell where "bad negroes would be punished," they would tell the missionaries, to wheedle them over ; "and surely," as an able writer on Jamaica says, "they could not

be afraid of duppies (or ghosts) without some idea of a future state?" Indeed nothing is more firmly impressed upon the mind of the African negroes, than that, "after death, they shall go back to Africa, and pass an eternity in revelling and feasting with their ancestors." This seems proof enough of their belief in a life to come.

Clearly, the great fear of ghosts in the minds of the African negroes proves their faith in a state beyond the present. They hold the *duppies*, as they call the spirits in existence after the dissolution of the body, in much terror, and firmly believe in their power to haunt, and, if with cause of wrath against them, to do them all kinds of harm. So strong indeed is this belief, that, though they will willingly bury their departed friends, as we are told, in their gardens, "they would not eat of the fruit of the earth that had covered the corpse of an enemy; for, if they did, it would be at the risk of their being struck down by his *duppy*. It is only the ghosts of their enemies they have to guard against, or of those they have injured in any way, and whose vengeance they consequently dread."

In his infidel moods Mr. Angelo Lyons would have persuaded his housekeeper, Faith Lincoln, if he could, that he had no fear of futurity; but she

knew him too well to believe it. The very pains he took to convince her of his sincerity disproved it; and she could not but listen with more interest than she chose to show any one to the fun Miss Rachel and Miss Jane had together about those "ashy-pale cheeks of dear papa's, at the sound of the Witch's voice echoing up the stairs in that awful manner!" It confirmed Faith not only in the opinion she had always entertained of "how Mr. Lyons belied his nature by his professed unbelief," but satisfied her that he had a profounder motive for so acting than met the eye. Which was the same thing with Faith Lincoln as a self confession that "if she were ever to know him as thoroughly as she wished to do, she had yet to plumb that 'deep, dark mind of his,'" as poor Aunt Joyce called it to her niece Ann on the night of their murder, "a good deal deeper than she had yet done, with all her knowledge of him."

The more Faith thought of it, the more certain she felt that Mr. Lyons was acting a part, in thus assuming an indifference to ordinary opinions and impressions, in things appertaining to his peace, so contrary to his nature. And which, therefore, as towards her, were vexatious and but small evidence of the one mind between them which she had built

more secret hopes on, perhaps, than she told any heart but her own. Yes, and if her surmises were correct, she "owed it to herself," she mentally resolved, "to clear up some other doubts that strangely clashed with certain bright visions that had dazzled her till he became the rich man he was; since when it seemed his chief aim to be as dark and mysterious towards her as before he was all candour and confidence."

True, looking at him from the point of view Faith did, possibly she attached more weight than she otherwise would have done to those capricious crotchets of a mind which she well knew had marked Angelo Lyons from boyhood, as one who, as he himself acknowledged, "obeyed the ruling motive, whether it helped him or not." So really there seemed little necessity for troubling herself about those gloomy moods of his, which were apparently gone in a moment at sight of his child, or if he heard her approaching step, or her voice calling him. Which shewed that if he "obeyed the ruling motive" in one respect, it had no less power to chase the clouds from his brow than to call them there.

Nor would Faith have troubled about them as much as she did, but for the simple reason that she was a woman, and, where her heart was fixed, a true

and fond and faithful one, however circumstances forbade her to avow it. From which it followed that she had her secret hopes, and doubts, and fears, far more of herself perhaps than of him, whom she loved with a passion none the less intense and unchangeable because it seemed madness in her to indulge it. Mixed up with which there might have been, naturally enough, some little jealousies, when she saw how he was courted and caressed, and knew for certain of more than one nobly-born young lady ready and willing to forego their claims to a coronet, to share the splendid fortunes of Mr. Angelo Lyons. Yes, and now there was Miss Florence Falconbridge also in every one's mouth, who "really was an exceedingly superior person; and though not to be compared, for beauty, with either Miss Thornhill or Lady Ada Chilvers—of whom more anon—was a great favourite of Mr. Lyons, and deserved to be so."

Altogether, Faith had enough to perplex her, notwithstanding the life in "clover" that people said she lived in Greystone House. If Faith Lincoln had no fear of ghosts and goblins, she had her "skeleton in the closet" as well as others, though to all appearances she was without a care.

That Mr. Lyons still regarded her with warmer

interest than he felt for any other woman, Faith could see ; also how necessary she was to his comfort, and with what marked deference he usually treated her ; but she could not blind herself to the fact that "he was less easy and unrestrained towards her since he became a rich man ; than he was, in other words, before the Balfour wealth changed him so much." Could she have attributed his altered manner to any diminution of his long-felt interest in her, or to a wish to gradually establish such an understanding between them as would leave him free to treat her simply and solely as his house-keeper, in the event of its pleasing him to crush for ever any tenderer hope she might have once indulged, she could have understood it. But it was not so. And it was a riddle in Angelo Lyons's conduct that puzzled Faith more to solve than any eccentricity of his that had ever baffled her. Her society, when he was at home alone, seemed to be more necessary to him than ever ; yet his eyes would fall under hers, and he would snap her up, and sometimes be quite sharp with her, and while he appeared to wish her to keep her seat and go on talking with him, pace the room restlessly up and down as if her presence wearied him. But if she offered to rise, his kind manner would return, and changing the conversation,

he would be himself again, as of yore, and leave no pains untried to please her. "What a strange man he was!"

And when he came home again after his grand visits to the neighbouring rank and fashion, he would tell her what he had seen or heard, and what he thought of it all. And with so much, too, of his old ease and openness, that it required little penetration to perceive that "if Faith Lincoln could never be Mrs. Angelo Lyons, any one else seemed to know who would be that enviable lady better than he did himself."

So far Faith had nothing to complain of. She was still his grand confidant. Nor could he ever sit long alone without summoning her to him; and though he hardly talked at all himself, if not in the mood, he would expect her to talk, and tell him the gossip of the place as far as she could gather it for him from one source or another. And when it included what he ought to have known better than any one else, but knew nothing of, viz., who was to be the lucky mistress of Greystone House—Faith Lincoln had studied that strange nature of Angelo Lyons's to little purpose if the day had yet come for her to abandon all personal hope, and resign herself to despair.

But, withal, his manner was peculiar, very peculiar sometimes, so much so that she almost doubted whether he was quite in his right senses. He was provoking, too. For it was impossible he could mean what he said when those gloomy fits came over him ; and then any one seemed to have more influence with him than she had. He would laugh her to scorn if she remonstrated with him for his dangerous doctrines ; but was awed by Miss Falconbridge, and sat under her lectures with his eyes thoughtfully fixed on his hands and without scarcely opening his mouth. Why was that ?

"Yes, why?" Faith would keep repeating to herself, after Florence Falconbridge had been induced to speak her mind freely to Mr. Lyons in consequence of some unguarded expression he had let drop, in the hearing of her pupil, which she felt it her duty to disapprove of,—“why does he wince so under Miss Falconbridge’s frown? However angry with him and in earnest I may be, it only makes him smile; but he listens to what she says, as if, differ with her how he may, he is careful not to hurt her feelings. He is very considerate for her!”

Yes, and it was his duty to be so, for reasons that Faith perfectly well understood ; however she let a little jealousy get the better of her at times when she

could work herself up in no other way to the pitch necessary for what she wanted—which was such a certainty, in her own mind, of Angelo Lyons's having a deeper motive for his peculiar manner towards her than he chose to disclose, whereby to justify her in never resting satisfied till she discovered what it was, be the consequences to herself what they might.

“His manner is not the same to me that it used to be,” she said mentally; “and why? I must know. *I will* know!” and where Faith Lincoln said *I will*—there was African blood in her veins as well as in Angelo Lyons's; neither of whom ever said *I will*, without meaning it.

Faith also listened with more anxiety to Miss Rachel and Miss Jane's “fun and nonsense” about “dear papa's pale cheeks,” when the little “Witch” whispered, loud enough to be heard in the gallery up-stairs—

“Speak, sister, speak! Is the deed done?”

than she let them suppose. The incident, in itself, was trifling enough; but it somehow interested Faith not a little, notwithstanding she took Miss Jane so severely to task for it. It seemed to so corroborate what she always insisted on, viz., that Mr. Lyons's feigned disbelief in a future state,—his creed being, according to his own shewing, *what is*

to be will be,—was assumed for a purpose ; or why, if so superior to ordinary emotions that death had no fears for him, did he change colour at anything so palpably self-evident as must have been Miss Jane's wicked little 'Witch's' voice in the hall ? 'Every drop of blood left his face,' they said ; and Miss Rachel declared "his lips trembled, going down stairs, while he was ridiculing her for being such a coward."

Faith dwelt a good deal on it, as so confirming her opinion of the studied part he played when demolishing at a blow all moral responsibilities, and cares and concerns for the future, with his sweeping fatalisms. He was evidently acting a part, and belying himself :—

"Did he ever go to such dreadful lengths," she asked herself, "till he became a rich man ? From boyhood he was always queer-principled and perverse ; but never, while his success in life depended on the character he bore, dared he give utterance, even to me, to the shocking things he now says without a blush. What is it has changed him so ? Why fight, in spirit, so against himself, torturing him as it does ? It must torture him ? I have eyes. How thin and care-worn he looks, with all his wealth ; how different to what he was in Trinidad. He has

riches in plenty—but is he happy? He has an income of Twelve Thousand a-year—but is he happy? He is immensely popular—but is he happy? He says he has no fears for the future—but is he happy? And the present is a series of continuous golden-dreams fulfilled—but is he happy? If not, why not? Has it aught to do with his changed manner? I must know—I *will* know, come what may of it ;” and the resolution taken, was not likely to be lightly abandoned by Faith Lincoln.

CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH LADY ADA CHILVERS IS FLUSHED WITH
THE HOPE OF MAKING A CONVERT.

TWELVE thousand a-year is tolerably certain of a good visiting list. Even without a tithe of Angelo Lyons, Esquire's popularity, whose fault but its own is it if an income like that must pay for its dinner every day of the week? It often curled Mr. Lyons's lip when Rachel made him look over the card-basket with her; but remembering his promise to her mother, he smiled at the many friends he had, and held his peace.

It rejoiced Rachel to count the daily cards and notes on the hall-table; because they were so many proofs to her of "how much her father was loved." And Miss Falconbridge never offered an objection to it; as inspect Miss Rachel's "arrangements" of their numerous visitors when she would, as often as

not the Browns, Joneses, and Robinsons were conspicuous at the top of the heaps, and my Lords and my Ladies, &c., &c., at the bottom. Yet, people called Florence Falconbridge proud. And so she was; but not of seeing her pupil sillily displaying, for effect's sake, those among their many friends who possibly cared the least for them.

One special name, however, Rachel insisted on always having well in sight, add as many others as she might to it, and that was a great favourite of hers—Lady Ada Chilvers. She liked the Thornhills, of Buck Park, and good Mr. and Mrs. Rosse, the vicar and his excellent wife, and Doctor Budge, their physician, and Mr. Salisbury their lawyer, with many others who shared her regard; but she loved Lady Ada. Was it that Lady Ada Chilvers loved her? It has a wonderful effect on young hearts—that tender leaning towards them of the hearts of their elders. From the first moment Rachel saw Lady Ada, she felt drawn to her—felt “sure she should love her.” It was at an evening party, and she could not take her eyes off her,—“Lady Ada was so like the portrait of her poor, dear, darling mamma in the boudoir at home, over her piano.”

Her papa smiled when she edged herself in between him and the Squire, to whom he was talking,

and whispered in his ear "How beautiful Lady Ada is ! how like dear mamma !"

It was a strange fancy of Rachel's ; for no two faces, looking at the features, could be more dissimilar. True, they were both blondes, with blue eyes and pale golden hair, and there was some resemblance in their figures and deportment ; but, otherwise, her papa could see no likeness to her mother, though he granted Lady Ada was "very pleasing mannered."

And this was the secret of it all. The "pleasing manners" were so like what she remembered of "poor, dear, darling mamma," and imparted so exact a resemblance to the expression in the portrait, ever uppermost in Rachel's mind—an expression of almost painful pensiveness, notwithstanding its exceeding loveliness,—that she saw nothing else but that Lady Ada was the image of her mother, and therefore "how beautiful she was ! how dearly she should love her !"

Of course it soon reached that sweet, amiable, lady—whose beautiful blue eyes, like her own, were fondly following her everywhere ; and of course it was not long before Miss Lyons learnt "how proud and pleased Lady Ada was to return love for love with one she felt she could esteem as much as Rachel Lyons."

Lady Ada Chilvers was a widow, still in mourning, though Lord Cecil had been dead two years. He lost his life in a duel abroad, brought about by a quarrel with a Belgian officer of the line, who was rude to his wife on the parade. Lord Cecil Chilvers was a loving, indulgent husband, and his loss was a bitter blow to his widow. For though he was heedless and extravagant, he was ever kind to her and devotedly attached, which went far perhaps to blind her to his faults ; and it was a constant source of grief to her, when he was gone, thinking of "how she might have had him by her side, if she had been as wise as she then was—when it was too late."

It was the thought ever uppermost with Lady Ada, and imparted that air of deep pensiveness to her face which so won Rachel's sympathies when she first saw her. It was her "own poor, dear, darling mamma's pensive expression exactly," to Rachel's eyes ; and really was not unlike it.

It seemed to engage Mr. Lyons less than it did Rachel ; though he was much struck with the "pleasing manners," as he called them, of the interesting widow, and glad to see his daughter received so warmly by her. It was a fine thing to be a favourite of Lady Ada Chilvers ; for, though poor for

her position, rank went a great way in Shiphampton, and the Chilvers, of that ilk, drew their lordly blood from Earls and Countesses.

Lady Thornhill, of Buck Park, and Lady Ada were sisters—Ada Chilvers being Adelaide Thornhill's junior by ten years. As sisters, they loved each other fondly. But Sir Compton Thornhill was always a little jealous of the better blood of his lordly brother-in-law; and though the wives "would have nothing to do with their husband's silly piques on that score," of course Lady Thornhill was Lady Adelaide, and Lady Chilvers was Lady Ada; against either of whom never was there a word breathed by their lords and masters, impugning their wifely allegiance, whatever else was laid to their charge. Lord Cecil, too, had but his Captain's pay when he married Ada Belmore, in addition to the two hundred pounds a-year that came to him at his mother's death; whereas, when Sir Compton Thornhill made Adelaide Belmore his wife, the Buck Park estate, &c., yielded him a rent-roll of not less than Seven Thousand *per annum*. Still, Lord Cecil was a lord, and Sir Compton was a baronet; and if Lady Ada said, with a profound courtesy, "your most obedient!" to Lady Adelaide, no doubt she had her indemnification for it when she told her husband how "immensely superior

the Thornhills were to the Chilvers's, and how much she *envied* them."

If Lady Ada Chilvers was poor, as a wife, she was still poorer, as a widow ; for, somehow, the little fortune Lord Cecil inherited from his grandfather had pretty well taken into itself those wings for which easy-got fortunes are famous, some time before his death. Whereby all of this world's wealth that Ada Chilvers had to show against her rich sister Adelaide Thornhill's grandeur, was her widow's pension, and the Ten Thousand Pounds, consols, secured to her by her marriage settlement.

It was enough, if she would make it so. And the better so to do, she became her sister's near neighbour at The Priory, as it was called, a pretty gothic cottage of Sir Compton's, not ten minutes' walk from Buck Park ; and not a little proud was the pleasant rural village of Buck of its good fortune. Very proud, too, was Sir Compton Thornhill of his tenant. It was more than he had reckoned on ; he had never dreamed of such an event as a Hampshire Chilvers renting under a Hampshire Thornhill. But so it was ; and the jovial Baronet went about whistling and rubbing his hands to the tune of it, as gay as if he had got an addition to his rent-roll of five hundred a-year, instead of fifty pounds only.

Lady Ada was well content to hear from Lady Adelaide, her sister, how "mightily pleased" Sir Compton was; and setting to work, soon made her pretty cot "quite a little palace," the people said.

Lady Ada, though she married an officer in the Guards, loved a peaceful life; Lady Adelaide, though wedded to a country squire, enjoyed the four months she annually spent in London more than any others. It by no means lessened their sisterly affection for each other; though it was easy to see they would have delighted in each other none the less had they thought and felt more alike and acted more in concert. Neither of them partook of their husbands' dispositions. Sir Compton Thornhill, though no money was too much for a coveted hunter, or race-horse, or pack of fox-hounds, was, at heart, a mean man; whereas Lady Thornhill found no pride or pleasure on the turf, or in the stables, or kennels, but had the character of being "as good-hearted a lady as was to be found in the county." It was just the reverse with Lord Cecil and Lady Ada—the money flew no one could tell where in Lord Cecil's hands; whereas, in Lady Ada's possession, there it remained safe till it was wanted, which she used smilingly to assure her heedless, extravagant husband

"it would be sure to be if she kept it long enough." Wherefore there were some who called Lady Ada over-careful, and not to be compared, for liberality, with her sister Lady Adelaide.

But these superficial surface-seers knew little of Ada Chilvers. By nature she was prudent rather than profuse, and her lavish husband's constant want of money had greatly increased the necessity, as she felt it, on her part, to assist him as little as possible in squandering what they had. Lord Cecil himself never called her a worse name than his "treasure of treasures," when she handed him what he wanted; and his "shocking bad stewardess," when, alas! she could not. He would have died deeper in debt than he did, but for the "over-carefulness" of his provident wife. As it was, it had cost her many privations to rescue his memory from reproach; but "not a farthing too much," she declared, "if it taught her the real value of enough when she had it, however 'impossible' it seemed to her grand kinsfolk at Buck Park for the daughter-in-law of a Peer of the realm to live, as a titled Lady ought, on three hundred a-year."

In society Lady Adelaide was called "a splendid woman," Lady Ada "a charming one;" and Sir Compton knew very well which of the two terms tin-

kled sweeter in his ear. He attached little consequence to simple charms ; but splendour in any shape made his eyes dance. He revelled in it. "That splendid creature!" was how he talked of Adelaide Belmore while he was gaining her heart ; and now everything he particularly fancied partook of the same sumptuous quality—his wife was 'splendid,' his house was 'splendid,' his horses were 'splendid,' his hounds were 'splendid,' his double-barrelled *Purdey* was a 'splendid' one, and 'what splendid ears!' was his exclamation whenever Clara Thornhill's lap-dog Monkey jumped on his knees. So no wonder that Lady Ada's unpretending merits fell short of the mark up at Buck Park, side by side with her 'splendid' sister's; though every one granted how 'charming' she was, and "how gracefully she supported, with her slender income, the high rank she held in the county, in right of her husband."

"Yes, yes, that's true!" Sir Compton would readily allow when it was talked about in his hearing, "keeps it up splendidly! By Jove! yes, she does, splendidly!" But though he said it with flashing eyes, at the thought of the 'Peer of the realm,' it was never the subject that put him in the best key with himself; notwithstanding the evident satisfaction he felt in the peer's daughter-in-law being his tenant

as she was, and likely to remain so for aught he could see; for the 'Peer of the realm' was poor, with two sons and three daughters to think for, and nephews and nieces unnumbered.

"Hem!" observed Mr. Lyons to Lady Thornhill, on his first presentation to Lady Ada Chilvers, when he heard of the good she did in the village with such slender means; "very noble minded; yes, very! Will be better off no doubt at the old Earl's death?"

"It is to be hoped so," responded Lady Adelaide, gravely. "But what matters it, if she is happy? Content is bliss."

Mr. Lyons smiled.

"Ah, you believe in nothing of the sort! You are a sad sceptic. Don't you think she is contented? You may tell me."

"She ought not to be, if she is."

"There's doctrine!"

"Quite sound. Her sphere of usefulness is cramped by her poverty—do you suppose there are no pangs in that to a mind like hers?"

"There need not be any pang at all, there ought not to be, if she does the best that she can."

"But there is."

"In the knowledge of duty fulfilled?"

"Hem—I don't know whether you ever sat down satisfied on that score; I know I never did."

"If I do all I can, what more can I do?"

"Wish for what would enable you to do what you can't, without it; and which would make you happier if you could."

"How do I know that?"

"You think it would; you feel it would; you believe it would—pretty strong testimony in its favour?"

"Yes, if it *would* make me happier. There's the question."

"Happier! you to say that. Ah, you may smile! I mean what I say."

"Hem—it seems hard rather, don't it, to endow the flesh with a soul ever yearning to do *more* good, and refuse it the means? Nature does strange things. I am generous, and have nothing to give—I am close-fisted, and have plenty to spare. It was born with me, too. I was a large-souled baby, a liberal boy, a youth full of kindly emotions—but how fares it with me as a man? My noble soul—what a boon! But pray observe, too—I was a narrow-minded baby, a mean boy, a selfish youth, full of my own wishes alone, and ways—and what

happens to me, as a man? I am enriched, I am honoured, I am ennobled, I am courted and caressed, a god on earth in my own conceit. Oh, my mean mind, what a boon! Hem—sufficient source, either way, for content, I suppose, looked at right?”

“Fie! fie!” would Lady Adelaide reply; “you must not talk so to Lady Ada, or woe betide you!”

But Angelo Lyons did so talk at the Priory as well as at Buck Park; and, moreover, with no worse consequences to himself, in particular, than that sort of ear being given him there which calmly listened to his strange talk, because it *was* “so strange, and so harmless.” Because she “could have refuted it all with a word,” Lady Ada let him run on. Which greatly astonished her sister. Though it was easily accounted for by Sir Compton, when he saw “what a favourite Rachel Lyons was at the Priory, and how much Lady Ada loved her.”

Perhaps no event since he made Greystone House his residence had gratified Mr. Lyons more than Lady Ada Chilvers’s fondness for his daughter. However it curled his lip to think of the endless friends his wealth had brought him, nothing pleased him better than to see Rachel admired and sought for. He despised the world’s heartlessness and hollowness, but was keenly alive to its slightest neglect;

he knew the worth of its bought smiles, but dreaded its frowns ; he scorned the pains it took to entertain him, but took good care not to be overlooked. And when it was told him on all sides how greatly his child was esteemed, though he thought he knew the worth of that also, what money could buy her to set her off to the best advantage was bought, cost what it would, and no eyes brightened more to see the effects of it than Angelo Lyons's own. With all his apparent apathy and indifference to ordinary emotions, he was an epicure at heart. Nothing but what was of the best and rarest would do for him. He ransacked the "worthless world" for what he wanted ; and found in it, too, with no small satisfaction, to judge by the pains and money it cost him. What he set his heart on he would have ; though he said "there was nothing worth wishing for but the ability to *do without* things, because you could have them." He called that "the perfection of power ;" but, nevertheless, collected about him all that his heart desired.

Still, strange and mysterious as he was, there were occasional indications in that deep, dark nature of Angelo Lyons's of so seemingly unselfish a disposition, that Lady Ada would let him run on with his 'peculiar notions,' and sit and listen to him

with a vague interest she could only account for, "because of the interest she felt in Rachel." He was "so magnificent!" What he did, too, in the way of charity, he did in such a noble manner; there was no show-off about him, it seemed such a genuine pleasure to him to do good, for good's sake, wholly apart from any personal advantage but what sprang from the purest motives. Indeed, Lady Ada's complaint was that "he did too much." But when did the discreetest of us lay that weakness to the charge of another, but with more admiration than anger, however much we might deem it our duty not to do likewise?

There is more or less interest in mysteriousness. Not that there was any mystery about Mr. Angelo Lyons in his daily talk and transactions with his neighbours; for no man could be more open and above board than he was out in the world, while engaged in its duties. No plainer spoken person was then to be found, nor a more frank or straightforward one. But Angelo Lyons in business, and out of business, was not exactly the same individual. Even to his housekeeper he was a mystery at times, when, in the privacy of his house, he reversed the usual mode of throwing off all disguises and being natural and at ease. But then he was at no pains

to give even an air of interest to his "strangeness;" nay, made himself as disagreeable as possible; whereas, when "amusing" Lady Ada with his "peculiarities" at the Priory, he so mystified her, that she was lost in wonder sometimes at the fertility of his imagination, rather than inclined to dispute with him. At first it "shocked her to hear him talk as he did," and she stoutly maintained her ground against "such doctrines;" till finding him "incurable," she would drop the long, dark eyelashes over her beautiful blue eyes, when he was "running on with his rubbish," and go on with what she was doing. As if time were too precious to waste on "such nonsense;" though if a word escaped her that fell from his lips, notwithstanding her indifference, Angelo Lyons was greatly mistaken.

Mr. Lyons could talk if he chose, and talk well. Usually he cared to give his tongue no more trouble than necessary, which by no means infers that his ears and understanding were idle. And therein he and his friend Sir Compton Thornhill differed considerably; for Sir Compton spoke a hundred times, in company, to Angelo Lyons, Esqr.'s once. But then Sir Compton was an impatient listener, and learnt little more than he taught; whereas, Angelo

Lyons was picking up knowledge while Sir Compton was always imparting it. So they got on very well together ; and Lady Ada could not but acknowledge the compliment of that usually taciturn tongue relaxing so with hers—the only ears, seemingly, it cared to address with patience.

Lady Ada's eternal home was "built on a rock," immovable, imperishable—Angelo Lyons's hopes of any other than what this world afforded him, "on the sands," if he meant what he said. And, yet, she sat and listened to him as if it mattered very little how he talked, safe as she felt herself in her "tower of strength against all assaults." Perhaps it would have mattered less had he not been as fascinatingly handsome as he was.

Good looks lead many to church who would, otherwise, not be there ; and they also invite the eyes, if not the ears, of the gravest and sagest, who, though they would be proof against Satan in his native ugliness, had better be both blind and deaf than give eye or heed to him, with his best face on. Lady Ada Chilvers dropped her eyes on her work while Angelo Lyons was "running on with his strange talk" to her ; but would she have listened to him for one minute if he had been ugly and poor? He was very handsome and he was very rich ; and,

though she would not even notice him while he was so disparaging himself in her estimation, she let him talk on, when it would have been so easy for her to have looked up and crushed him with a frown; or if that were impossible, to have changed the subject and talked of the weather.

Not but that she sometimes could patiently listen no longer; and then unable to further control herself—

“I wonder what you would think of me,” she would ask him, with almost a derisive smile, “if I argued with you?”

“By which I am to understand—what?” was his reply, as imperturbably as if *his* were the ‘rock,’ not *hers*, to build on.

“Of course that I don’t. And if I did, how you would pity me!”

“As you would me, you mean, if you thought I meant what I said?”

“Indeed, yes.”

“Despise me, perhaps?”

“I said pity.”

“Hem!”—and there he would stop, with his fixed gaze on her; as though, for some reason, glad of the easy retreat it afforded him, however he blushed at it.

No doubt Lady Ada gave him credit for knowing better than it pleased him to grant, and so was as patient with him as she was ; in the hope, perhaps, that, thus treated, she would shame him out of his absurdities better than by arguing with him, which usually put her out of temper, and gave him the advantage over her. Or it might be that she fancied she saw in him qualities of heart as well as of mind to be turned to good account by right handling. That he could be liberal to munificence, every day proved ; also that his heart was susceptible of strong affection was verified by his love for his child ; also his steady business habits and signal successes bore ample evidence that he had no lack of common sense. Wherefore, “ what a pity it was he should let such pernicious things enter his head !—what a much happier man he would have been if he had had a good, fond, firm, sensible wife to rule him, and rout all such ridiculous rubbish out of him, which, done wisely, would have been easy enough.”

So Lady Ada thought ; and the one sole motive for it did her genuine affection for Rachel credit. But such concern for the father was perilous, if she meant to be true to her first impression, when she found what an unbeliever he was, viz., that she “ would rather be wedded to a Christian hedger and

ditcher than be the wife of the richest and handsomest man on the earth, with no faith in anything but his money." How many a woman has ended in idolizing the creature, her only first interest in whom was her zealous desire to worship and glorify the Creator !

From the day she first met and conversed with Rachel, Lady Ada Chilvers regarded it as by no means the difficult task her sister, Lady Thornhill, said it would be, to make a convert of Angelo Lyons. She thought she saw in him anything but a stubborn spirit ; nay, she was sure that what she said to him "had its impression," and that he only wanted right handling to scatter to the winds all his sceptical notions. Rachel's mother was an exemplary woman, but too meek, too yielding, and utterly incapable of contending with a subtle spirit like his ; and though Faith Lincoln, his housekeeper, had superior powers of mind, it could scarcely be expected that she would have much weight with him in such matters, mixed up as she was in his domestic affairs, and not a person, apparently, very piously disposed.

It set Lady Ada thinking. And the more she thought, the more she was convinced that it was the duty of those who cared for his lovely child, if not

for him, to leave no effort untried to win him from his strange ways, which not only marred his own happiness, but every one else's about him. For Rachel made no secret of "how it pained her to hear her father say things that she was sure he did not mean; but that when he was in those strange moods, it was useless talking to him; so she ran away from him, for it frightened her so."

It was just what Lady Ada supposed. But running away from him would never mend matters. Talking to him, as he ought to be talked to, might. It *would*, if he could "only be brought to listen;" and glancing at herself in the glass, a momentary paleness came over Lady Ada's fair complexion, and then a little flush, while she arranged her hair in the way Rachel said "her papa admired so the first time he saw her at Buck Park;" the one as well as the other brought there perhaps by the thought of "what a triumph it would be to make a convert of Angelo Lyons."

CHAPTER XIII.

GIVES AN INSTANCE OF LADY ADA CHILVERS'S SUR-
PRISING KNOWLEDGE OF THE OLD MASTERS,
WHEREBY SHE MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A
VERY INTERESTING YOUNG MAN.

THE day drew near for the long talked of juvenile party at Greystone House; and the buzz and flutter there was about it in Shiphampton sufficiently proved that, however the good folks of that ancient borough made business their sheet anchor, they could be led away for a while by the tide of pleasure as well as others, carry them where it might, and dance and disport themselves on life's pleasant waters as gaily as the gayest.

A large evening party of any description at the late abode of the Balfours was sure to occasion considerable excitement. It was the first time Mr. Lyons had been induced to give a party since he

had come to live in Shiphampton. He had entertained a few of his most intimate friends at dinner, "in a friendly way," as people called it; but it being now considered right by Lady Thornhill and Miss Falconbridge that Miss Lyons should be encouraged to collect about her more of her young friends and acquaintances than she had hitherto done, out of regard for her father's habits, he gave them *carte blanche* for her next birthday, and any amount they wanted he gave it *éclat*.

The town was astir in consequence; and the jubilant faces of the invited, and the perturbed looks of those who were not, contrasted amusingly for the placid lookers on who had no hopes either way, and exceedingly enjoyed it, of course.

But however much Mr. Lyons wished to do the right thing in Shiphampton, as far as lay in his power, he found it difficult to please everybody. And his inability to give universal satisfaction was not confined to the non-recipients of those elegant little pink-scented notes, to be the enviable possessor of one of which, at the memorable epoch under notice, appeared, by the joy it diffused, to be something so indispensable, that one could feel for the poignant distress of the disappointed, if their misery were proportionately great. As many were

asked as could be asked ; also it was Mr. Lyons's desire that every branch of trade in Shiphampton should benefit as much as possible by any outlays on his part, which tended to circulate his money among the minor tradespeople. There was no fear of the large houses not reaping enough from his extensive home and foreign shipping operations, &c., &c. ; and it greatly rejoiced him when came an opportunity to throw money into the smaller channels, his kindly eye for which, as well as the great trunks wherefrom he drew such enormous sums, had done so much to make him popular in the county since he became a rich man.

But here again was painfully evidenced the impossibility of satisfying every one. After doing all he could, it must have caused a seemingly noble nature like Mr. Angelo Lyons's no little disquiet to know how many of the humbler working classes in Shiphampton "never touched a half-penny of his wealth." It was one of those inevitable things that must be borne ; and Mr. Lyons bore it as best he might ; but not without it occasionally reaching his ears—how fortunate it was for him, as a philanthropist, that he had plenty to give, if his popularity sprang from that source, and his pride were in it.

As with other rising mercantile towns, Shiphamp-

ton owed much of its opulence to brisk competition. Old Shiphampton and New Shiphampton bore as little practical resemblance to each other as exists between free-trade and fettered. It was a wretched rotten borough once, and was just beginning to wake out of its long paralysing sleep of rusty, dusty, musty, crusty old memories, when Mr. Lyons succeeded to the wealth of the Balfours. The fine old borough was yawning and stretching itself, evidently well pleased to find it was coming to life again, and had such strength left for the new era opening for it, if it would up, and throw off its shackles and compete for the prizes. Its day was come—would it seize the golden opportunity, or lose it for ever?

“Seize it by all means!” cried Mr. Angelo Lyons; and what one pair of hands could do had been done by him since he set foot in the town, to make it second to no maritime port in England for its East and West Indian relations. All admitted it, all lauded him lustily for it; it was in every one’s mouth—to whom Shiphampton was principally indebted for its wonderful rise from comparative obscurity to a position that would soon place it amongst the noblest commercial cities.

But, withal, Angelo Lyons, Esq., had his detractors as well as his admirers; in other words, do

what he would, there was always somebody or something "none the better for it;" which would throw him into fits of musing; out of which Sir Compton Thornhill would rouse him by declaring it was "just the same" with him.

"By Heaven, sir, I've been trying at it ever since I came to Buck—to please them—and what's the consequence? Now I've left it off, to please myself—not a grumble! Cuss 'em! it preyed on me so, they set up shop on it. Probably you've remarked how much haler and handsomer I've got lately? It's since I gave over caring a rap whether they liked me or not, for what they got out of me. And look at you! There's a bag of bones! Don't be an ass."

"You certainly are looking very well," acquiesced Mr. Lyons.

"But the bluff, blunt Baronet of Buck Park, and Angelo Lyons, Esq., of Greystone House, were very different persons. And though he granted that Sir Compton "bore ample evidence in his improved looks of the wisdom of his acts," Angelo Lyons preferred being an ass: "Seeing," he said, "how daily richer and richer he got by his bag of bones; while, with all his hale, handsome looks, it would not be long, if report spoke true, before the

jovial Baronet had to go again to the money lenders, unless his turf-luck returned something considerable into his pocket, instead of taking it out of it." But, withal, as was just now observed, Mr. Lyons, with the best intentions, could not please everybody.

It seems that, till Mr. Lyons's arrival in Shiphampton, the lighting and watering of the town were in sluggish hands. In fact, gas was but partially used, and what water came into the cisterns was scanty and bad. The remedies were easy enough; and before Greystone House had called Angelo Lyons, Esq., its master twelve months, lo and behold! up rose a grand Gas Company; and then a grand Water Company, to make the town-folks stare with astonishment at what they could do if they pleased. Then up rose the builders, too; till what there was of the Old Town became so small, in comparison with what the New one would be by and bye, that what one company could not do, two companies might. So that the public at last were well served, and the lucky shareholders in excellent key. It was competition that the old borough wanted, to rouse it out of its lethargy. And now it had got it in good earnest, and not a provincial town in all England was better lighted and watered than Shiphampton. True, it created some little jealousies

and animosities; rival powers are not noted for fellowship; but what of that if the public were well served? "opposition 'busses' never filled well when running on friendly terms."

Of course Mr. Lyons was chairman of one company, and another Magnus Opollo was chairman of the other; and, of course, down to the lamp-lighters and errand-boys, there was a pretty firm determination on the part of them all to outshine and outstrip their opponents whenever they could. It was the necessary consequence of his own reforms, and Mr. Lyons had to take his share of the penalties of popularity as well as its profits.

Now it so happened that there was a meeting of three or four of the New Gas Company's operatives at the little inn called *The Jackdaw*, in Water Lane, on the evening preceding the "flare-up," as they termed it, at Greystone House, to discuss the affairs of the nation in general, and their own private interest therein in particular, over their usual friendly glass before wishing good night. Of course the next night's "grand doings, where the murder was" was the theme uppermost, speculation being on the *qui vive* to hear all about the costly preparations that were being made, and the "splendid affair"—as Sir Compton told everybody—it was expected to be.

“Humph!” growled a dusky visaged stoker, as he raised the beer to his lips; “I’d like to know what the poor old lady would say to it, if so be she could look up out of her grave?”

“What, indeed!” was the unanimous response. “Stare rather, wouldn’t she?”

“It does seem strange, don’t it,” went on the first speaker, Mr. Simon Box, “those ‘Peelers’ never misses the right one by no chance, when nobody minds whether they’re caught or not; but come to want ’em for a black job like that up there, I’m blessed if they’re any more use, nine times out of ten, than that quart pot.”

“Seems so, don’t it, Simon?” rejoined a stout, red-faced, fiery-eyed man of middle age and authoritative mien, taking the pipe he was smoking in his arm-chair in the corner from his lips, and displaying the bloated, full-face of no less a person of consequence in Shiphampton than Mr. John Strong, the tax-gatherer.

“It do, Mr. Strong.”

“Cutting their ears hoff, too,” muttered the tax-collector, vehemently puffing away again—“there’s a hact!”

The atrocity of which seemed to absorb Mr. John Strong so, that he kept murmuring between the

clouds he emitted from his mouth, "there's a hact," as if he could think of that only; while Mr. Simon Box, dwelling rather on the "humbug of those 'Peelers,'" as he called the local police, for letting the murderers go loose, and locking up the petty larcenists, continued growling in his throat against the "'bosh' of a government," whose paid agents, come to test them, were "no more use, nine times out of ten, than quart pots."

But there was one of the quartette in the tap-room of *The Jackdaw* that evening, who, buried in his own reflections, sat silent and musing, as if he had something heavier on his mind than was troubling Mr. Strong and Mr. Box. His brow was overcast, he sat all of a heap, with rounded back, and his eyes on the iron-rimmed toes of his high-lows, and with his massive jaw so firmly set, that if what was then and there passing in Enoch Fletcher's mind was peaceful and pleasant, his countenance sadly belied him; for there was a savage sullenness in its expression not at all agreeable to contemplate, if physiognomy is anything to go by. He had the look of a man ill at ease about something, but not of one who shrunk from observation; there was nothing about him either doubtful or dangerous, nothing sinister nor villainous; but he seemed, as

every now and then he rolled his eyes round the room when any one came in or went out, as if he would have no objection to quarrel with somebody and fight it out; but certainly not as if Enoch Fletcher were a man to take an unfair advantage or deal a coward-blow.

"What's amiss now, Mr. Enoch?" asked his young mate opposite, with the sooty mask, and red cheeks smiling through it, as he pushed the pewter pot across the table after taking a draught; "aint you well?"

"Yes, yes, Richard, well enough for that; but it's how I said it would be."

"What! about putting that chap Lambert over us, do you mean?"

"Aye, sure!"

"Has he?"

"Mr. Lyons? Yes. Didn't you hear? He comes on to-morrow."

"Partly Lady Ada Chilvers's doing, wasn't it, Mr. Enoch? Leastways so they say."

"What odds then, Richard? Nice chicken, I'm thinking, to be crowing over us. How's he to know? I'm mistaken if I stand it, Richard; so that's flat."

"Why, he was taking their likenesses, somebody

was saying, up at The Park there, and The Priory, all last week, painting on 'em," smiled Richard, evidently not a little puzzled to conceive how a delicate handed chap like him could answer.

"What, a hartist?" said Mr. Strong from the depths of his chest. "That's rum."

"It's the sort can turn their hands to anything," observed Mr. Box, ruminatively, after a deep pull at the pewter; "and, come what may, take to the photographing the people for sixpence, frame and all, any day they've got enough to buy that thing in the box they spy through at you with one eye, with the apron over their heads, while they shut the other. My misses and Tom and Billy were taken beautiful! all together, last Monday."

"What, by him?" asked Richard, with a smile, "as has been taking them up at Buck?"

"Bless you! no, Richard. That youngster, Alan Lambert, do you mean? Not he! He charges ten and six, don't he, for—what do you call 'em?—them chinks, all rough like, and that smears terrible if you touch 'em."

"Humph!" from Mr. Strong, with indignation. "Ten and six! And can get it done beautiful, frame and all, for sixpence—there's a fact!" and resuming his pipe, the tax-gatherer shewed by the

placid way he now puffed away at it, where he should go for his portrait when so minded.

"Best stick to his chinks," muttered Enoch Fletcher. "Likely enough it's to please Lady Ada; else, do you think Mr. Lyons don't know better than to come that sort of game over us? It won't fit, though, I can tell him."

"It's my belief," observed Mr. Box, "a deal of money's to be made by them cameras they spy at us through. But mind, if you're took, your clothes be smart, and your hands in your pockets; and, whatever you do, keep your mouth shut, mind that; else, you may be took for ever, and never get one to suit you. But, lor! those smeary chinks must be starving work, get as little by them as he's done, by all accounts, since he came. Why, Mary Finch, where he lodges, was telling me only yesterday, that 'till Lady Chilvers got him up to the Hall, he hadn't done no more than them at the Priory ever since he took her top rooms. You see, who'll give ten and six each, and no abatement, when you may get them easy, as you may say, like my misses and Tom and Billy, done beautiful, frame and all, for sixpence?"

"Not reasonable, no how, is it?" rejoined Richard Coles, whose ruddy cheeks, where the dirt was off

them, and sparkling eyes, bespoke an amiable inclination to agree, as far as possible, with every one.

“And what’s he going to get by coming down here?” murmured Mr. Enoch. “Not me to mind him. Where’s the lift I was promised by Sir Compton last year? Aye, and you, too, Richard? And now to have that beardless youngster put over us—not a boy at the works going to stand that, I know.”

“Atrocious!—cut their ears off—there’s a hact!” mumbled Mr. Strong in his sleep.

“I’ll tell you what it is, Richard,” went on Mr. Enoch, to whom the tax-collector’s somnolent ejaculations were no novelty, “there’ll be a row among us before long, if so be whenever there’s a chance for an old hand, it’s given away this fashion to a new one, to favour Lady Ada.”

“She’s a kind, good lady! Mr. Enoch,” returned Richard, who was courting The Priory housemaid.

“Shuts her eyes, eh Dick, when Richard Coles is in there of an evening, on the sly, with his smutty face and six days clothes on?”

“Ha! ha! that’s your sort, eh, Enoch—does as she’d be done by? Good luck to her!” and if the huge draught Dick took to drink it in were intended to be evidence of his sincerity, clearly Lady Ada

had a warm friend in Richard Coles, as the empty pot touchingly attested.

“Well,” laughed Enoch, somewhat mollified at the thought of how the beer had been drunk up while he was grumbling; “it’s no good, is it, fighting against the great folks who’ve got it all in their own hands? Mustn’t quarrel with our bread and butter, must we? But I’m altered, Dick, if I’ll stand being crowed over by that young bantam, or any other, so I tell you! What’s he to do down here? Take Godfrey Forest’s place, as under clerk? Yes! and how much a week will that be to him, while we’re not getting half? That’s just, is it?”

But Richard was thinking of Susan, at The Priory, and of his promise to see her that night before she went to bed. So Enoch had no help for it but to stomach his wrath as best he could; and, leaving Mr. Strong and Mr. Box to club for what else they pleased when John Strong woke up from his doze, to go home to his wife and children, and try and learn the chief lesson of life—how best to do his duty, with content and thankfulness, under every circumstance, be the state what it might unto which it pleased Heaven to call him.

Poor Lady Ada! How difficult it is to do un-mixed good. In using her influence with Mr. Lyons

to obtain for Mary Finch's lodger, alias Lambert by name, a better livelihood than it was likely he would ever pick up in Shiphampton with his paints and crayons, she little thought of any harm that could come from it. She had taken an interest in the young artist for two reasons ; first, from the peculiar circumstances of his introduction to her, and then from hearing where he lived, in Mary Finch's pretty cottage on The Green at Buck, and how highly Molly spoke of him ! He was "so gentle and feeling," Molly said, "gave them no trouble, was contented with whatever they did for him, made a shoulder of mutton, dressed for him on Sunday, last all the week ; yet, was a true gentleman born, they could see, by his small white hands, and noble air, and the pleasant way he spoke to every one."

Lady Ada's first knowledge of Mr. Lambert came thus.—Like Mr. Lyons, Lady Ada was an ardent lover of the Arts, and as far as her slender means would allow, added such fresh "gems" as she could procure to her little cabinet collection in which she took great pride. For its size, it was very choice ; and often drew Mr. Lyons for an afternoon's walk across the pleasant meadows to Buck, especially when came a new purchase, and his correct judgment was wanted to corroborate hers. It was not often that a

'gem of a picture' was to be picked up in Shiphampton ; but one day, when shopping in Market Street, Lady Ada's attention was drawn by Miss Lyons, who was walking with her, to what appeared to them to be a veritable *Rubens* in the window of an old curiosity shop, famed for sometimes coming into possession of 'the genuine article' by inexplicable means ; but as there it was, all you had to do was to buy it if you would, and *could* ; if not, you could look at it till somebody else did, which was something.

"Admirable !" exclaimed Lady Ada, after a breathless gaze. "A genuine *Rubens* ! if I am any judge. My love," to Rachel Lyons, "I must know how much would make it mine ;" and entering the shop, old Nathan, as he was called, its white haired, bent-backed, shrunken, shrivelled up little master, came hobbling from his parlour ; at all times anxious to oblige his customers, whether they bought of him or did not.

"Yes, it was a *Rubens*—" an undoubted *Rubens* !—as her ladyship could see."

"How beautiful !" ejaculated Rachel, in a whisper, as the old Israelite turned his head, as if wishful to take the picture down that they might see it the better.

At which moment a young man, seemingly of

good rank, though seedily dressed, stopped to look at it ; and "no, no," said Lady Ada, "let it stay ; the light is very good where it is. Is it for sale ?"

The old Jew raised his eyes from his withered hands on the counter ; and though he did not say yes, in reply, there was that in his smile which left Lady Ada in no doubt but that, careless as he seemed about parting with it, the picture would be sold when it fetched its price.

To get a fuller view of it, the young man outside came so close to the door that he could hear what the old Jew said, in the sharp, shrill key in which he answered the questions put to him by the ladies inside. One of whom was so lovely, though so young, that Molly's lodger, Mr. Alan Lambert, seemed hardly to know which to admire more, "the perfect life itself or the painting ?" Both were inexpressibly beautiful ! And there was a resemblance in the two faces which accounted, perhaps, for the way in which the young artist kept his enchanted gaze for a moment or two on the sweet up-turned face of the young living girl, while he could get a glimpse of it, without infringing the bounds of good breeding.

It was a picture of a kneeling Mary Magdalene, admirably painted, if not by *Rubens* himself, by

one who had wonderfully reproduced him, so wonderfully in the present instance, that even as good a judge as old Nathan was justified in not taking a farthing less for it—if he parted with it—than what he had asked; which though nothing to wealth like Mr. Angelo Lyons's, took the colour out of poor Lady Ada's cheeks, "even to think of it."

Lady Ada shook her head disconsolately. Taking which to mean that the price was too high:—

"What, for an original *Rubens*?" smiled Nathan.
"No, no, my lady."

"Will you warrant it?"

"Warrant!" he squeaked, glancing sharply at the seedy-looking young loiterer at the side-window.
"It needs none."

"Has Mr. Lyons, of Greystone House, seen it?"

"I can't say, my lady."

"Will you give me the refusal of it"—looking at her watch—"till four o'clock?"

"At the price mentioned?"

"If no less will do?"

"Not a farthing! Match it for the money, and I'll give it your ladyship."

Lady Ada stood silent a moment, as if hesitating whether to fly from the temptation, or to shut her eyes to everything but the delights of it, say the

word, make the treasure hers, and send for Mr. Angelo Lyons to see "how brave she had been."

"Best consult papa first, don't you think so?" advised Rachel.

"I may sell it, my lady," put in Nathan, "if I don't hear from you by four o'clock?"

"Well, perhaps that will be best, Mr. Nathan. Yes, you shall know by then. Good morning,"—and away went Lady Ada and Rachel to the docks, in the hope of finding Mr. Lyons among his ships. But he had "just left," the clerk told them, and "gone home." No, nor was he at home. Faith "could not think where he was."

"I so wanted to see him!" said Lady Ada.

"We *must* see papa before four," added Miss Rachel, eagerly. "Perhaps he would walk over after luncheon, Faith. Tell him he *must*."

"I want his opinion of a picture before I buy it," explained Lady Ada; "and have promised to decide about it by four o'clock."

"I will be sure to tell Mr. Lyons, when he comes in," promised Faith.

Forced to be satisfied with which, off they hurried homeward, full of the *Rubens*; and "the evident delight with which the very handsome, clever-looking

young man outside was devouring it with his eyes, while they were talking of it, within."

"It was Mr. Lambert, the artist, I think, said Rachel, thoughtfully, "who has taken Mary Finch's upper rooms. He went there from the town, Mary was telling Faith, for his health, last week. Now I recollect, he was sketching on the hill-side, near The Priory, when I and Jane Rosse went in the donkey-chaise to see Molly and Hester on Wednesday. How thin and pale he looks, does he not?"

"Good gracious, darling, then be sure it is an original *Rubens*! for I thought he never would have done studying it. I fancied I had seen his face before. A very intelligent countenance, very! An artist, is he?"

"And a very talented one, papa says, from what he has seen of his portraits."

"Paints portraits, too? How fortunate! I know somebody I should like amazingly to have in a gilt frame over the mantle piece in my boudoir; and if ever she sit to him, I know how she shall be dressed, and wear those golden tresses, to please me. We must call and hear what Molly says about it."

And so chatting on, presently they entered the shrubbery that led to The Cottage; so called as

often as The Priory, indeed oftener by Lady Ada who liked simple names and the simple truths they stood for.

But fast as they had walked, in the hope that Mr. Lyons might have been induced by the delicious beauty of the day to come and lunch with them, Molly's Lodger, Mr. Alan Lambert, had reached home before them ; and not a little was Molly puzzled to conceive what had happened when he bade her come with him up stairs and hear what he had to say to her.

"Can it be," said Molly to herself, "that he isn't comfortable, and wants to leave? Yet, he's got the feather-bed poor dear Misses slept in for thirty years and more under the mattress, and he might have it at the top if he would. Or, may be, we do his meat too much. He asked us not, when he came the first day; but, law! poor dear Misses used to have hers dried up almost to a cinder, and that's how it is, mayhap, Hester forgets. Oh, dear me! nothing but cares and crosses in this mortal life, God help us!"

Which bringing her into the studio—"Oh, Mrs. Finch!" began Alan Lambert, "I have seen that lovely young lady again to day, in a shop in Shiphampton—the same I saw on Wednesday, in the don-

key-chaise, with Miss Rosse, when I was sketching The Mill on the hill side."

Molly heaved a grateful sigh ; and inwardly ejaculating "Heaven be thanked !" would have further eased her mind of "the mattress at top," and how "their poor dear Misses always would have *her* meat done," but that Mr. Lambert stopped her by asking—

"Is Lady Ada Chilvers very rich?"

It set Molly thinking "what he wanted to know for?"

"Whether or no, Mrs. Finch, I happened to hear her ask the price of a picture just now in Market Street; and, however rich she may be, I hope she won't give what the dealer asks for it."

Molly stared.

"It was at Mr. Nathan's old curiosity shop ; and a good picture it was, Mrs. Finch ; but not an original."

Still Molly was in the dark.

"Not a *Rubens*, which Lady Ada believes it to be."

"Law, Sir ! why don't you paint one ? which you'll be able soon to do now easy enough, when your health's better ; and then take it to The Priory, or up

to The Hall? Money's no object to them there, where they take a fancy. Only a fortnight ago Sir Compton gave a Thousand Pounds, they say, for another racer. Law! that's a good thought, too! Perhaps you might get to paint it."

It flushed the young artist's cheeks. Evidently Molly thought highly of him. But at present he was most bent on putting Lady Chilvers on her guard against buying a *copy* for an *original*; and now plainly put it to Molly, "whether, by going at once to The Cottage, and stating what he had said to her, it would not be a friendly act on her part?"

"Why not step across yourself?" suggested Molly, maternally.

"I could not think of taking such a liberty."

"Law, bless you, sir, liberty! Just go once, and you'll never say that any more."

"If you would kindly do it for me, Mrs. Finch, I should feel obliged."

"You'd see Miss Lyons, too, so you would; for she's there to-day," added Molly.

"By four o'clock Lady Ada must give Mr. Nathan an answer, whether she will have the picture or not—it is two o'clock now, Mrs. Finch."

Molly looked up with a beseeching eye, enough to

say "you had better go yourself, it might be your making!" but Alan Lambert shook his head.

"What am I to say?" asked Molly.

"That the picture Lady Ada and Miss Lyons were looking at this morning in Market Street, is a copy, not an original."

"And that Mr. Lambert says so?"

"If you please."

"Best write it down, don't you think, sir?"

Which having done on a card in pencil, away trudged Molly on her errand, nothing loath; though sadly grieving all the way that he had "lost such an opportunity of speaking a good word for himself."

The ladies at The Cottage and at The Hall were always pleased to see Molly; for though apt to look rather more on the dark side of things than agreed with her happiness, she was a good, honest, thrifty, well-meaning creature, and had been a trustworthy servant in one place for forty years.

Lady Ada and Rachel had just seated themselves on a garden bench among the rhododendrons and roses, to rest awhile after their long walk, when Molly's arrival at The Priory was made known to them; as also that she was the bearer of a message to Lady Ada from Mr. Lambert, on The Green,

“a very particular message ! which she must deliver herself.”

Why it should have called up a sudden flush into Lady Ada’s cheeks, and simultaneously taken all the colour out of Miss Rachel’s, while the page went to fetch Molly on to the lawn, we don’t know ; but it did.

“A particular message from Mr. Lambert—how odd !”

“Yes, my lady,” said Molly, respectfully declining the seat offered her in consideration of her grey hairs, as she was in a hurry to get back, as Hester was out, to give Mr. Lambert his dinner. “Though, law, my lady ! as to that,” added Molly, proudly, “it’s little he will let us do for him all the week but serve up the cold meat and boil him a potato, he is so plain-wayed and easily pleased.”

“And draws and paints beautifully ! we hear,” smiled Lady Ada.

Molly knit her brow.

“Not much encouragement for him here, I fear, Mary.”

“It was n’t *that* I was thinking of, my lady. I was thinking what a pity it was I couldn’t prevail on him to step across himself with his portfolio, my lady ; then, my lady, you would have seen what he

could do. It's wonderful, young as he is! There's a young girl he's painted since he came to us, with a bunch of lilies and violets in her hand, that—it's true, my lady—the flies light on when he takes it out to shew us."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Rachel, colouring. "Painted it since he came to live with you, Mary?"

"Yes, sure, Miss! And began it after he came in on Wednesday, when he says he saw you and Miss Rosse in the donkey-chaise; and finished it yesterday. It's wonderful!"

"Oh, a girl with a posy in her hand?" smiled Lady Ada. "For sale?"

"Sure, my lady, any one, that *could*, would buy it of him in a minute! But he means, he says, to put it in a gold frame, and hang it up in his room over the sofa. May be, it puts him in mind of somebody he loves — though he's an orphan, without brothers or sisters—for he's always looking at it."

"Very likely," agreed Lady Ada. "But we must not forget the message you have brought me from him, Mary."

"Law, no! to be sure not, my lady. There's a head I've got! God have mercy on us! We need be always saying it. If I could only have persuaded him to step over himself."

"It would have pleased me very much, Mary. But if Mr. Lambert is waiting for his dinner, I must not detain you any longer."

"That's true, my lady. Well, then, to be sure, I was to tell your ladyship that the picture you and Miss Lyons were looking at this morning in Market Street, is a *copy*—not an—law, then! what was the word? There's a head I've got! But it's written down here, if your ladyship will be pleased to read it."

"*Original*.—I see. Indeed! How very kind!" and Lady Ada looked at Rachel Lyons, and Rachel at Lady Ada, in astonishment, while reading the pencil note.

"I think, my lady, Mr. Lambert said he overheard Mr. Nathan telling you what was not true; and so he thought you ought not to give the price he asked you for it, and hoped you would not take it as a liberty his sending me over. He is so gentlemanly!"

"On the contrary, Mary, pray give my compliments to Mr. Lambert, and assure him, from me, how kind I think it of him and how much obliged I am! Also tell him what pleasure I should have had in making his acquaintance, if he had come himself; and that I hope he will now do so with-

out further ceremony. Can you remember it all?"

"Law, yes! my lady!" chuckled Molly, not a little delighted with the success of her mission. Nor seemingly was Miss Rachel less pleased than Molly at the promise it held out of a speedy peep at the "young girl with the posy of lilies and violets in her hand"—flowers she loved so much herself, and a bunch of which she had picked with Jane Rosse, at the Vicarage, on the very day they saw Mr. Lambert sketching on the hill-side, when they passed in the donkey-chaise, to call on Molly.

Next day saw Mr. Alan Lambert crossing The Green on his way to pay his respects, in person, to Lady Ada. Molly was sadly put out because he would not take his portfolio with him. She thought it so wrong of him, "when he might have put such a pretty penny in his pocket if he had been advised by her."

Lady Ada Chilvers had a charming way of immediately putting every one at their ease who conversed with her. It sprang from a generous mind and real good breeding. Seemingly she took no pains about it; it was involuntary with her to be kind and affable; and she was so, without the slightest effort; and thus, with the sweetest grace, made her visitors,

whom she esteemed, feel more at home than if she had loaded them with courtly smiles, or overwhelmed them with obligations. Lady Ada Chilvers had the charming art, in perfection, of making others happy ; because it was natural to her to do so, and you could not but feel in her society that you were ministering to her gratification as much as she was to yours. It put you on the best terms with yourself. Her simple wish seemed to be that you should be as happy as she herself was ; and by being the witness rather than the cause and promoter of your happiness, she so charmed you with your own feelings, that well our young artist, Alan Lambert, might felicitate himself, before he had been seated five minutes in the drawing-room, that he had taken Molly's advice, and "put on the grey tweed suit that became him so well, and done as he was told to do."

"And you find Buck much more healthy and pleasant to live in," went on Lady Ada, after the first greetings, "than Shiphampton. A pretty rural village, is it not?"

"Yes, indeed ! and abounding in charming spots for the pencil. Where wish for a lovelier view than from the hill-top, overlooking the Mill Brook ? It is full of *Cuyps*, and *Ruysdaels*, and *Gainsboroughs*,

and *Copley Fieldings*. You paint, Lady Chilvers, do you not?"

"In water-colours, yes, a little."

He glanced at the drawings on the walls; and looked wistfully at the one nearest him. It was the same old water-mill, and the rippling little river that set it going, with its pleasant meadows and orchards, and cows under the shade of the trees, that he was sketching when the young ladies passed the hill-foot in the donkey-chaise a few days back, to call on Molly; and why or wherefore he knew best himself, but the colour came into his cheeks.

"It is a favourite subject with us all," smiled Lady Ada,—"*The Old Mill*. You are at work on it, Mary Finch was saying yesterday? How do you like that view of it from the road?"

"Exceedingly! But you lose the broken down old ivy wall in the miller's garden, don't you, which I have got in mine? Otherwise, you have a better foreground; and get more of the oak-copse in behind than I do. Yes, it is very clever."

"Which I cannot get Miss Lyons to grant. But I had it framed, all the same, and hung there, I tell her, till she can replace it with a better. That's fair, don't you think so?"

It accounted for those pretty blushes of Miss

Rachel's, as Mr. Alan Lambert turned from the picture to do homage to the gifted painter, while Lady Ada was enjoying her embarrassment exceedingly. For Rachel Lyons was almost as strange a girl, in some things, as her father was a man ; and of one thing Lady Ada was determined to break her, if possible, and that was the silly way she shrank from hearing herself praised, where praise was her due, and ought to have filled with joy a young and affectionate heart like hers was. It never did so. Nay, praise always seemed to pain rather than please her ; and she would tell Faith, to whom she opened her mind more than to anyone else, that "nothing made her so sad as to hear herself admired and extolled for what had cost her no pains, and, therefore, did her no credit."

Lady Ada had remarked this constitutional peculiarity in Rachel from the first day of their acquaintance ; and attributing it in a great measure to the influence her father's sombre character would naturally have on a sensitive, deep-thinking child so much in his society as she was, made it a point to judiciously discourage it whenever she had an opportunity. She was glad, therefore, to hear Mr. Lambert so warmly commend the drawing in her presence, before he knew who did it, but more so

to observe the evident gratification it gave her when he pointed out some of its defects, as "evidences of how much better she would soon do, if she chose," which suffused her beautiful face with the first real gleam of genuine pleasure Lady Ada had ever seen in it; though Rachel "had the fondest of fathers, the happiest of homes, and all that wealth could command at her beck and call," every one said.

Rachel listened with marked interest to Mr. Lambert's critical remarks on her drawing, because it was so new to her *not* to be praised. For now he came to examine it more closely, it was "defective—out of drawing in some places, not in perspective in others, and here the light was not strong enough, and there the shadows were too deep, and next time she must "tone down her colouring rather more, so as, with the contrasts, to produce that harmony, in the whole, which was indispensable to a pleasing effect."

"How delightful it was to be talked to thus, as if she were a reasonable creature!" and Lady Ada sat and smiled her perfect concurrence in silence; but not without seeing, from that moment, more into Rachel's mind than she had ever seen till then. Every one else said to her when they looked at her productions—"Oh, Miss Lyons," or "oh, Rachel,

how beautiful! how masterly!" when her good sense told her how far from even tolerable they were, regarded as works of Art. It was so refreshing, so creditable to her understanding, to be able thus to stand well with herself. It appealed, as it were, to a power within her, of the existence of which, though she felt conscious, spite of all flattery, she feared to trust to, unconfirmed but by her own youthful judgment; it opened up to her quick-seeing imagination what had never been shewn her before—wherein she failed; and the fresh brightness it gave her somewhat too pensive loveliness, made her look so beautiful, so interesting, that for a moment or two the young artist gazed on her with an undisguised admiration he could not resist, and saw no need to conceal.

"How surpassingly lovely she is!" he mentally exclaimed; "and why should I not own it?" He did! As he would have done honest heart-felt homage at the shrine of any other of the Creator's fairest works intended for man's happiness.

"I shall now get my companion drawing to it soon, I hope," said Lady Ada, "which I have been looking for so long. You hear, my love," to Rachel, "how wrong it would be for you to doubt about it any more."

“Indeed, yes!” acquiesced Mr. Lambert, with glowing eyes; “it would be more than wrong, it would be a sin not to persevere and succeed, with such talent as Miss Lyons has.” But seeing her suddenly become thoughtful—“I sincerely mean it,” he added, as if he divined the cause of her downcast look. “I love my Art too much to discredit it, if I am any judge, by false praise; and you, Miss Lyons, love it also too much, or I am mistaken, not to feel sure that what I say is the truth. You could not have drawn that picture of *The Mill Brook*, faulty as it is, without being sensible of the power there is in you to do better—could she, Lady Chilvers?”

“Certainly not! She don’t deny it. But I suppose flattery is so frequent in these cases, Mr. Lambert, that any real merit there may be in a girl is injured by it rather than helped; which perhaps makes Miss Lyons look so distrustfully at us sometimes when we only wish to be just.

“Very well, then, I will try again,” smiled Rachel, as the colour rose to her cheeks, “if Mr. Lambert will have the kindness to give me a lesson now and then, if he can spare time.”

It settled the matter in a moment—the bargain was struck—and the “companion drawing,” in the mind’s eye of them all, as good as a *fait accompli*.

“And now about my *Rubens* in Market Street,” said Lady Ada, dolefully; “only think of a wonderful judge like I am being deceived! Are you sure?”

“Quite positive.”

Lady Ada looked at the very young man facing her, as if surprised at such confidence in one so little experienced.

He read her thoughts; and repeated “quite positive!”

“The design is *Rubens’s*?”

“Assuredly.”

“And the ‘air,’ and ‘motion,’ and ‘rich colouring,’ are his, too, exactly?”

“Do you think so?”

“If an imitation, it is an inimitable one!”

“A *pasticcio*, as the Italians call it?”

“Oh, how mortifying! when I thought myself so clever.”

“Nay, it has not even the merit of one of those productions called *pasticcios*, or pie-pictures, because, as you know, like a *pâté*, they are composed of various kinds of meat,—for there is no inventive originality in it, with mere imitation of style in the composition and colouring of a great master. It is a copy, and nothing but a copy—pretty faithful that’s true—but no, no, ‘he must possess the *mind*

of the great master, who would come up to his expression,' as Charles Blanc says in his *History of The Painters*, 'and be endowed with his genius, before he could attain to his grandeur.' Yes, and not only is this *veritable Rubens* of Mr. Nathan's a copy—it is—indeed it is—a copy of a copy—rest assured of it."

"Worse and worse! Oh, Rachel dear! I must give up buying bargains?"

"Of course you know," rejoined Alan Lambert, now in his element, "for what *David Teniers*, the younger, was most famous?"

"But you would not call him a mere imitator, would you?" asked Rachel, who loved no books in her father's library better than those which discoursed of the old Italian and Dutch and Flemish masters.

"Oh, no, certainly not."

"And if he were," observed Lady Ada—"enthusiastic imitation, of the works of great masters, as his biographer says, is almost always the first visible form of inspiration in youth. It is the recognition of the surpassing talent of others which often gives the first promise of it in the student himself."

"You mean," said Alan Lambert, kindling at the glowing thoughts the remark called up, "that a copy

by *Teniers*, the younger, is not so much a copy as *another specimen* by the great masters. Exactly Charles Blanc's idea, his very words. He does not imitate *Titian* or *Rubens*, but *renews* them? Well, there is some truth in that. But what's to be said for the pie-pictures, the *pasticcios* proper?—for the *genuine Rubens* in the window in Market Street—for the undoubted *copy from a copy*, I wonder?"

"Only," smiled Rachel, "that it is very cruel of you to so dash our hopes. But you ought to tell us how you know it is what you say; or, should it turn out that you are wrong—how then?"

"Then, Miss Lyons, the consequence will unquestionably be that I did not paint it myself, which I unquestionably did. And, moreover, will guarantee that it can be yours, frame and all, if you please, Lady Ada, for any spare corner you could find for it among your *Great Originals*, for the fun of puzzling the *connoisseurs*."

"A master-piece!" cried Lady Ada, clapping her hands with delight. "Oh, my love," to Rachel, "send Robin off this moment for the picture. We'll hang it between the *Paul Veronese* and the *Adrian Ostarde*; yes, and when your papa comes, you shall see what I will make him offer me for it before I part with it."

Need it be added how our young artist, Alan Lambert, proudly sniffed the air that evening on his return to old Molly? with no less a piece of good news to tell her than that he was "formally installed by Mr. Lyons and Lady Ada, as Miss Lyons's instructor in drawing and water colours; with a free pass in and out of The Priory and Greystone House whenever he pleased. Provided always, that if he found himself unappreciated in Shiphampton, he would accept such honourable amends for it as Mr. Lyons had it in his power and patronage to offer him—"A proposition, Mrs. Finch," added Mr. Lambert, gravely, "so apparently pleasing to both Lady Ada and Miss Rachel, that I have promised to give it serious consideration, and shall certainly do so."

It accorded entirely with Molly's maternal bosom, touching that "one joint of meat a-week," and what she had been told "you might have your likeness taken for in Shiphampton, frame and all;" but, for some reason, Molly hung her head.

Alan Lambert had a quick eye.

"And I am in hopes, Mrs. Finch," he just wished to mention, "that come what may, you will have as much cause to be satisfied with me, as your lodger, as I have with you, as my landlady. It will

be long, I trust, ere we separate. It is but a healthy walk into town. And I am going to ask Lady Ada's gardener for some of those beautiful prize roses of his, to plant under my window ; so that by next summer, Mrs. Finch, please Heaven all goes well, I mean to train them up to the roof, and then they will come peeping into my bed-room, won't they, when I open the sash ?”

It was a bargain ! and all that Molly wanted to say further about it was—

“ Oh, sir, now you see, don't you, what a good thing it was you put on that handsome suit, and went and shewed yourself, brave and bold, as I told you ? It will be your making as sure as you're born ! Excuse me, sir, for being so free ; but it isn't every day good tidings come, and God knows I've had many cares.”

Mr. Lyons must have been greatly pleased with Mr. Alan Lambert, to have so readily come to terms with him for the instruction of his daughter. It was not every “ old hand at the Arts ” would have satisfied Mr. Lyons, much less a young one like Alan Lambert. Perhaps Lady Ada's voice in the matter had weight, for he always gave earnest heed to her opinions, and in this instance she “ minced no words” with him, but plainly let him understand,

before they asked his consent, that "both she and Rachel meant to have their own way, whether he liked it or not." So Mr. Lambert had only to bow his perfect approval, and be duly installed.

The "decided *take-in*," too, of the "undoubted *Rubens*," between the *Paul Veronese* and the *Adrian Ostarde*, in the dining-room, assisted Mr. Lambert no little. What Lady Ada wanted for it—if she parted with it, as old Nathan said—is immaterial; it must have been a swinging sum, by the way Mr. Lyons screwed up his mouth and shook his head, before he consented to give it. Consent he did, and probably would have given double as much if she had asked it. But no—there the picture was, Lady Ada's own, and no money should rob her of it. "Are not the design, and air, and motion, and richness of colouring *Rubens's* all over?" she asked him.

"Admirable!" agreed Mr. Lyons.

"You will never question our correct judgment, after this, will you, papa dear?" asked Rachel, archly.

"Why suppose it, you gipsy?"

"Not a *pasticcio*—nothing of that sort, eh?" smiled Alan Lambert.

"A *pasticcio*!" screamed Lady Ada; "what next?"

"Dinner I hope," replied Mr. Lyons, calmly; "for I am hungry."

"All the same, you wish me joy of my *Rubens*, I am sure," laughed Lady Ada.

"How much did you give for it?"

"Something fabulous!"

"It's true, papa."

"Have you taken it out of the frame?"

"What for, papa?"

"Because the inner moulding is so wide, perhaps it hides the name. It was so with a celebrated copy of *David Teniers*, junior, in the Archduke Leopold's collection, long supposed to be one of *Rubens's* best productions, till they took it out of its frame and found who painted it."

"We might take it down and have a look, might we not?" said Alan Lambert, deferentially, to Lady Ada. "Certainly there ought to be the name somewhere, and it is rather a broad border."

"After dinner!" proposed Mr. Lyons.

"No, now!" insisted Rachel:—and lo and behold! there, sure enough, in one corner was neither *Peter Paul Rubens*, nor his inimitable imitator *David Teniers*, junior; but no less a master of his Art than

Alan Lambert! Being positively certified as to which—

“Now offer me what you will for it,” smiled Lady Ada, leading the way into dinner, “and see what you’ll get!”

All which having put the reader in possession of what a gratifying impression Mr. Alan Lambert created at Greystone House, and The Priory, immediately leading as it did to Lady Ada’s determining to enlist Mr. Lyons’s powerful interest in his behalf—a clue is gained to the meaning of Enoch Fletcher and his mate’s grumblings at *The Jackdaw*, in Water Lane, over their beer. For being no less impressed than was Lady Ada with the impossibility of such talent and modesty as Mr. Lambert’s ever finding a right market in Shiphampton, it cost Mr. Lyons but small pains to carry out Lady Ada’s generous scheme for him, which had for its intention the certain future provision of such regular periodical payments for value received, at the docks, or otherwise, as would establish their young friend on The Green in a way that would insure them many more of his clever *chef-d’œuvres* than her *Rubens*, and feed, and clothe him, and pay his landlady, too, without fail. Wherefore, it so happening that the under clerkship at the Gas and Water Works was

vacant by the removal of Mr. Godfrey Forest to the dockyard, "there was at once a post, worth a good hundred and fifty pounds a year, with perquisites, for a young fellow to step into, at all events till something more to his liking turned up for him."

Alan Lambert loved the Arts. His whole life from childhood had been spent, as you might say, in the very lap of them, as will be further explained by and bye; and it cost him a pang to leave his "nice left-hand light, every morning, in Molly's top room, and his dear old easel and paints and pencils—now dearer to him than ever, since he found what delight his charming pupil also took in them,—for about as unpoetical a pursuit, down in that dark, dirty town as could well be conceived. But, as Mr. Lyons truly said, there was "intrinsic worth in *certainties* ; and the sweet pleasures of Molly and Hester's rural retreat would in no wise be diminished, when business was over, by having seen nothing all day to compare with it."

So "good bye, Mrs. Finch," said Mr. Alan to her at the garden gate, with a hearty shake of the hand, the first morning he set off, with a hearts-ease in his button-hole, on his "new career of usefulness," as Lady Ada called it; "good bye! good bye! I shall be home, mind, long before dark. Yes, and as

the days lengthen, see how many hours I shall have to do anything I like in, before bed? I don't mean to be idle of an evening, my dear Mrs. Finch, I can tell you! How provoking, eh, if the tailor don't send me my new dress-suit by Friday—Miss Rachel's birthday."

Which bringing us back to where we were at the beginning of the chapter, viz., within eye and ear-reach of the buzz and flutter afloat, in expectation of the grand doings to come off so soon at Greystone House, in commemoration of that joyous event, I must beg the reader's pardon for tarrying a little on the way, to take by the hand a very deserving young fellow, in the person of the youthful artist, Alan Lambert, who humbly asked to be introduced at this juncture,—and, without further digression, go on with my story.

CHAPTER XIV.

RACHEL'S DAY BEFORE THE BALL.

MR. LYONS liked plenty of light and air in his house; and had taken care, in reconstructing Grey-stone House, to make it as cheerful and healthy as possible. In the Balfours' time it was a handsome, solid, roomy structure; but the windows were unproportionably small, in comparison with the thickness and width of the walls; and though the various chambers were capacious and lofty enough, the house was ill ventilated, and unless the blinds were up and a bright sun shone into it, had by no means a bright aspect, or wholesome smell prevalent, especially when the moist winds came whistling up from the water.

There was the genuine Balfour cut of business about it, however; and though Mr. Lyons could have chosen other localities in Shiphampton whereon

he would have preferred to have built himself a house to live in, he was too sensible a man not to know the value of a good name and popular traditions, and what they had done for the far-famed House the sole inheritor of which he had now become in so sudden and unexpected a manner.

But there could be no harm, while the restorations were going on—rendered necessary by the rage and wanton mischief of the rabble after the murder—in making such salutary alterations and improvements as the case called for, and modern usages required. So the battered walls were enlarged, and the smashed windows replaced with new ones of the most approved kind, and gas brought into the basement and hall and on the landings, which quite illuminated the interior at night, and in the winter helped to warm it. Not only, too, were you brightly lighted from the hall to the attics, but the effect was extremely elegant. For what art could do, to please the eye, had been done with great taste and no little cost; so that, from its chastened lustre, you should suppose it was produced by the finest oil, not gas, beautifully burning as it did in those curious Chinese glass-globes, cunningly suspended from the walls like floating balls of fire.

Those charming Chinese lamps were wonderful

favourites of Miss Rachel's; and her only regret, respecting them, in reference to the brilliant display her father was bent on making on her birthday, chiefly to please their grand friends at Buck Park, was that there were not enough for the purpose, and no possibility of adding to them but by sending to Paris. What was to be done? With the utmost dispatch, how could they get them in time for Friday? "It might be done," said Mr. Lyons, "by a journey there and back with expedition."

"If so," said Alan Lambert, "give me my instructions, sir, and if it can be done, it *shall* be! It will be all in the way of business; and I pant to show you what a nimble lamp-lighter I can be."

It was a great deal more than Rachel had bargained for in her own mind. It had never occurred to her to lose Alan Lambert at such a busy moment; and she declared they "could do very well without more lamps." But Alan had heard her tell Jane Rosse "how she wished she could get them, to complete the enchanting effect Lady Thornhill said it would have to thus illuminate the conservatory so beautifully;" and was off and on his way to Paris for them before Rachel was told he was gone.

"He will not be back in time, I am afraid," said Rachel, thoughtfully.

"Yes, he will," differed her father; and to prove that he thought so, he set the gas-fitters to work with all speed to lay on the necessary pipes and apparatus, and get ready what else would be wanted to complete his plans by Mr. Lambert's return.

There was but one house in Paris where it was likely Mr. Lambert would find what he sought for. But not only did he possess himself of the lamps in question, of the various sizes and shapes required, but brought back with him sundry other illuminative "works of Art," &c., &c., as he called them, which would help to "astonish the folks." Moreover, he re-entered the boudoir in Greystone House, to lay his treasures before Miss Rachel, in such ample time for what else had to be done by Friday night, that it gave him two clear days to personally evince his artistic skill, together with Miss Falconbridge and Miss Rosse, in the effective distribution of his pretty illuminative devices. So that when the whole was pronounced by Miss Rachel "perfect!" it was easy to see who stood very high in her estimation, as one who had "such a plain, simple, truthful, earnest, straightforward way of doing what he undertook, without fuss or parade;" which, as Faith

quite agreed, was "of infinite importance to a young man who had to make his way in the world."

Mr. Lyons smiled his placid approvals. When the gas being turned on from the main, for experiment sake, the effect was so startling! that they all stood gazing at it like great babies—the calm, grave, epicurean, unemotional Mr. Angelo Lyons included.

But Faith was most interested in their "nimble young lamp-lighter," as he called himself, and "the noble, yet modest, way," as she expressed it, "that he said and did everything in; so different to most handsome young fellows who had nice faces and figures to be proud of, and, yet, fell so short when they essayed to make themselves useful."

And it was exactly in that light Rachel Lyons was regarding him, with eyes, young as hers were, that glowed with no less appreciation of the pains he had taken to please her, because few words of thanks escaped her. Possibly it was more in accordance with Rachel's disposition to leave unexpressed what she most felt; and possibly Alan Lambert asked for no surer acknowledgments of her satisfaction than what he fancied she meant to convey by such kind looks as she gave him, instead of words, as best harmonised with her quiet character. But with all

the pleasure it gave him to win one of Miss Rachel's encouraging smiles, while at work for her, Alan Lambert would have equally done his best to succeed in what he had set his mind on, if she had been the plainest girl in the parish instead of the prettiest. His pride was far more to please himself, in what he was doing, than any one else; short of which, not even all that Miss Jane Rosse or Lady Thornhill or Lady Ada Chilvers could say, in addition to Miss Rachel's sweet approbation, would have taken a drop of blood from his open, frank, fearless brow, or mantled it with a vain thought, if it had clashed with his convictions to believe them. Truthfulness and integrity were thereon written so intelligibly, that, from the first time she saw him, Rachel told Jane Rosse, as they passed him, sketching, in their donkey-chaise, "how noble looking" she thought him, and "how proud Molly and Hester were of their lodger;" and "how talented" he was; but "how pale and thin, too, which was because, poor fellow! he had to work so hard for a living."

Nor is Rachel Lyons the first wealthy young heiress by many who has felt her maidenly interests first awakened by struggling worth. True, Rachel was but fifteen years old at the time we are speaking of, and as innocently simple in her worldly experi-

ences as might be; but, like her father, she had quick perceptions, and an observant eye, and deep-thinking mind, coupled with the warm, fond, gentle, generous heart of her mother; and it was often a cause of more solicitude to her governess, Miss Falconbridge, than she cared to tell any one but Lady Ada, that "her beloved pupil was as forward as she was, for her age."

Alan Lambert's pale and thin looks evidently interested the richest heiress in Hampshire. But, truth to speak, he was very handsome! and "so gentlemanly!" Molly said; and "with an air and manner about him," according to Hester, "no young nobleman in the land but might be proud of! See how he behaved to those whose likenesses he took. Had he a mercenary motive in it? Didn't that shew? All his aims were great, and raised him high above everything that was mean and sordid." It was fine praise of Molly and Hester's; so no wonder the young ladies smiled kindly on him when they saw him toiling on the hill-side for his bread.

In truth, Rachel Lyons' sympathies were always enlisted rather by anything that appealed to her pity than her pride. She could not but note those pale, thin looks of the young artist's at Molly's

cottage, and the well-worn suit he went abroad in, with his head as up, and his step as light and bounding, as if, instead of having next to nothing in his pockets, he was weighed down with the wealth of the world. How vividly it contrasted with her father's ceaseless thoughtfulness, and care-worn brow, and measured tread, to the tune of his countless riches. "With all his wealth," Rachel said to herself, "when did I ever see him look really happy?" And meet Alan Lambert where you would, with rigid economy stamped on him from his hat to his shoes, and with a face and figure you longed to fill out with good food, if you could have done it, anyhow, unknown to his pride,—what a beaming smile you got from him in return for your shake of the hand; what treasures was *he* master of who carried such a heart as that in his bold open, honest, happy face, which never appeared to know a care, unless it might be, if he loved you, lest, by a glance or sigh, you scarcely appreciated, may be, the sanguine hopes he had of speedy distinction as much as he did himself.

It was so new, too, to Rachel, for poverty to address her in any but terms of praise. "From infancy she had been told little else but how beautiful! how good! how gifted! how faultless! how favoured

by fortune ! she was. But, as in Zoe Ghrimes's case, of Barbadoes, it had not made Rachel Lyons a fool. For up to the age of ten she had a fond and watchful mother's eye ever over her, or it would have fared little better with her perhaps than it had done with Zoe, left as she was to the besotted love of a father who, in blindly indulging her every whim, considered he was only doing his duty to himself, as her only parent. True, Otto Ghrimes and Angelo Lyons were widely different men ; but it may be questioned whether, with his peculiar principles and princely habits, Angelo Lyons would have been even as good a sole surviving parent to Rachel, as Otto Ghrimes, the voluptuary, was to his daughter, had Rachel been deprived as early in life as Zoe was of a mother's love ? Clearly, what of piety, and the patience and meekness and kind-heartedness it inculcated, Rachel's daily life and conduct gave evidence of, she inherited from her mother ; wanting which, she might have been as keen-witted and polished and prosperous as her father was, and had little more of the reader's regard than Zoe Ghrimes ; unless there had been that in her inborn nature, derived from that gentle mother, which was proof against all assaults from within or without.

What Rachel most admired in Mr. Lambert was

his plain spoken truthfulness, and practicality, and hatred of false-shewing in any shape. Rachel was eminently a matter-of-fact girl, though highly sensitive and susceptible ; and was always regretting to Lady Ada and Miss Falconbridge her “inability, rich and powerful as her father was, to do any real good, such as her heart told her she ought to do, with the unbounded means she had at command. For her father denied her nothing she asked him for. And, yet, she was not happy, as happy as she thought riches ought to make their possessors, if they were the earthly blessings they were called.

“ Oh, Lady Ada !” she would sometimes exclaim, with flushed cheeks and almost tears in her eyes, “ it may be sinful of me to say so, but it’s true—I feel I should be happier, far happier, if I were poor and had to earn my bread.”

“ And, pray, why, Rachel ?” would Lady Ada ask, with a mother’s fondness. “ If we rightly use the talents entrusted to us, whether many or few, duties done should make us happy enough.”

But it did not remove the cloud from Rachel’s brow. And as Lady Ada’s aim was always to encourage her to open her heart to her, when so inclined, she so framed her replies as best to induce her so to do ; which usually ended in Rachel’s throw-

ing her arms affectionately round her, and promising to "mind all she said, and be as contented and thankful as possible."

What it was brought Rachel to The Priory the day before her birthday, might well puzzle Lady Ada, knowing as she did how busy they were at Greystone House, preparing for the ball. But there Rachel Lyons was. And all Lady Ada had to do was to be perfectly assured that her sweet young friend had her motives for so acting, and that, if she desired to be made acquainted with them, she must let her communicate them in her own way. It was the only way with Rachel. Most girls would have been in a state of high excitement on such an occasion—not so Rachel. Jane Rosse was wild about it; and perhaps Jane's was the more enviable state of mind of the two. Natures differ. For though no two girls could love each other more sincerely than did Jane and Rachel, two greater opposites in mind and person never existed.

"Jane, I want to see Lady Ada to-day," was Rachel's sudden resolve while they were in the midst of some exquisite classic floral-wreaths for the marble busts of Homer and Socrates, in the hall. "So go on, dear, till I return; for there's Felix at the door with the ponies to take me there."

“Oh, Rachel! what a pity to go to-day, and we have the Apollo, and Venus, and Cupid, and I don’t know how many more to make wreaths for, my darling, and we haven’t got half flowers enough. But if you must, you must! Only mind and don’t forget to bring back all the nicest flowers you can lay hands on, and plenty of ivy, and some lilies, darling, if you can find any, and myrtle, and little bud roses—you know—good bye, sweetest! Don’t be long, there’s a dear! Make Darby and Joan step out—the fat, lazy beauties—and you may do it, there and back, in two hours at most, allowing an hour for everything else needful — not forgetting the flowers, mind that!”

And after talking of the next day’s grand doings, about which all the town was astir, and how kind it was of Mr. Lambert to take the pains and trouble for them he was doing:—

“Oh, Lady Ada!” exclaimed Rachel, as the reader has just read, “I feel I should be happier, far happier, if I were poor and had to earn my bread.”

It was so in accordance with the many similar outbursts which Lady Ada had before heard from the same lips, that she saw in a moment what was pressing most on her young friend’s pensive mind—not what was engaging gay, laughing, light-hearted

Jane's, among the pretty flowers and festoons at home, and the beautiful new presents Mr. Lyons kept bringing her ; but solely, " why it was, when everything was being done that wealth could purchase to please her, that heart of hers was as heavy as if something disastrous were going to happen, instead of delightful ?"

" My sweet child," smilingly reproved Lady Ada, " how can you talk so ? Who has a better right to be happy than yourself ? I cannot lay a selfish act to your charge. If I could, I should understand you better. You ought to be so happy, Rachel, so very, very happy ! unless I am woefully deceived."

" I know I ought," said Rachel, meeting Lady Ada's full look at her with glistening eyes ; " and it seems shockingly ungrateful of me to complain. But why is my heart so heavy, when it ought to be as light and gay as Jane Rosse's is, and as I wish it was ?"

" My love, there is no necessity for you to be Jane Rosse, nor for Jane to be Rachel Lyons. Jane's is a merry heart. And so may Rachel's be, in its own way, quite as merry as Jane's ; and, yet, love the shade more than the sunshine, to think rather than to talk, and to quietly discourse the night away in a snug corner, perhaps, if it might best please itself, in

preference to much dancing. My sweet child, the world is wide enough for us all to indulge our right natural likings and dislikings in it, with much universal joy and profit, if we will only be reasonable creatures. Our Maker requires that of us. In sin only need there be sadness—sadness, my dear child, beyond the moment our minds are true to themselves. We are never true to ourselves, never true to the Divine purpose for which we were made, Rachel, when we are unduly exalted or unduly cast down. Though, of the two, I should think a too gay heart, in a young breast, must be more pleasing to the Almighty than a too grave one. You know, my love, very well what I mean?"

"Oh, yes!"

"And agree with me, that of all girls on earth who ought to be thankful and happy, that one is yourself?"

"Do you call dear papa a happy man?" and as she put the question in a sunk tone, Rachel's lips slightly trembled, as if a chord had been unwittingly struck by it that pained her, but why or wherefore she hardly knew.

"I suppose," smiled Lady Ada, after an instant's reflection, "your papa would scarcely agree with us if we tried to convince him to the contrary. Defi-

nitions differ so, as to that little word *happiness*? Did you ever hear two alike? I have mine; and you have yours; and your papa has his. And why not, if in enjoying what is our own, we neither take from our neighbours, for it, nor from God's glory? Then we may safely indulge ourselves, may we not?"

It touched another chord more in harmony with Rachel's heart; and for a little while she sat as if deeply struck by it. Nor was Lady Ada in any hurry to break the spell. Then brisking up, as though full of something else which it had called to mind—

"Shall I tell you," said Rachel, with glowing cheeks and eyes full of earnestness, "what I often think I would be, if I had all dear papa's money to do as I liked with, and no love for you, Lady Ada, nor Jane, nor any one else, in particular, to stop me—you would never guess."

"What, my darling?"

"A *sœur de charité*. Yes, I feel I would, as true as God now hears me say it."

Lady Ada stared at her.

"I mean it—I do indeed—Oh, yes, I do!"

"Nonsense! my love. Sentimental silliness! Who or what has put such foolish fancies into your

head? Pretty notions indeed for a young girl of your age, her father's only child, and heiress to the finest fortune in Hampshire! Are you crazy? *Sœur de charité!* Is there no way, my dear, but that for you to be useful and do your womanly duty, when called on to fulfil your rightful mission, as, maybe, a wife, and a mother, and the mistress of a family? Ridiculous, my dear!" and Lady Ada said it with all the more firmness, because of the peculiar girl she well knew she had to deal with in Rachel—one who, like her father, thought well before she spoke, and who never acted from mere impulse.

But Rachel was by no means embarrassed by this cold reception of her heart-felt avowal. On the contrary, Lady Ada saw plainly, by the fervent fire of her eyes and her compressed lips, so like her father's when he meant what he said, that if she had her mother's sweet, meek, patient, uncomplaining nature in her, to some extent, she had also his fixity of resolution, and in the present instance was "proud of it, too." Wherefore she was of opinion that it behoved her to combat such 'nonsense,' as she purposely called it, and so nip in the bud what she foresaw, if not stoutly battled with, would acquire such

deep root, that bye and bye perhaps nothing could shake it.

"Indeed I mean what I say," repeated Rachel, calmly, and with a smile at the grave face Lady Ada put on.

"May be *now*, my love; but you will grow wiser as you grow older, I hope, and see the folly of it. It is always folly for young people to blindly embrace pursuits for which they have no special call nor qualifications. Clergymen, for instance, should feel that *call*, and so should nurses, or never presume to be either. It is no slight presumption for a young man to become the one, or for a young woman to become the other, without a due knowledge of the duties involved, and a taste for them. They ought to seriously *feel* the *call*, I mean, before they undertake it."

"And which if they do," replied Rachel, just in the unemotional tone her father would have said it in, "how delighted, and how right, too, they must be, to obey it!"

"Ah, my love, you speak from the best of feelings! and very unselfish and good and kind and generous it is of you to so feel. But wait for two or three years, till you have seen a little more of life, before you talk of quitting the social position you ought to fill and adorn. And for what? Very

likely to be justly lauded for your self-sacrificing zeal and goodness and benevolence, but, at the same time, to leave undone, may be, those no less essential duties imposed on you by your rank in life, and the means given you to properly uphold it. I have no right, my love, to try for name and fame abroad, even in the best cause, to the neglect of my duties at home. There is always enough of good, and over, for us to do in our own spheres. As women, especially, we need not travel far, my love, to be reminded of much we have left behind us undone. But what sort of subject is this, my darling, to-day? Of all days to be talking of sick rooms and sad faces! when we ought to be merrily preparing our ball-dresses and practising our steps for to-morrow. Apropos of which, you and Jane Rosse will be dressed alike."

"Exactly!" smiled Rachel, evidently pleased at the thought.

"How nice! Well, now we are talking sound sense. And you will want some more flowers and evergreens? Come, then, and take home the carriage-full. That's sensible, too! And Mr. Lambert has got the new lamps, you say, and is upon the ladder, with his coat off, hammering away for you? Noble fellow! Oh, yes! and Percy Thornhill is coming

down, if he can get leave? so what a number of beaux you will have."

Rachel was thinking, seemingly, of something else, by replying—

"What do you suppose Mr. Lambert said to dear Jane, when she was tying one of Jennet's aprons round him, to save his trousers?"

"My love, am I a witch?"

"That he couldn't possibly come to the ball to-morrow, if the tailor didn't send him home his new clothes."

Lady Ada was *en désespoir*!

Rachel heaved a scarcely audible sigh.

"Mr. Niggles must scarcely be aware, my love, what would be the terrible consequences of any such fatal breach of faith on his part; for—"

"Yes," caught up Rachel, "he promised Mr. Lambert he should have them *for certain* on Friday. Molly told Faith so, when she was in town."

"I suppose," smiled Lady Ada, "it would hardly be correct if I dropped a word about it in Mr. Nugent Niggles's ear when I am there to-day to order Robin's new livery? In strict propriety, the thing seems hardly feasible. But—he wants the suit home?"

"Oh, yes, of course!"

“Must have it, or he can’t go to the ball?”

“So he positively told dear Jane.”

“Out of all *etiquette*, that’s true, my darling, for ladies to go to gentlemen’s tailors. But, as your papa says, ‘what is to be, will be;’ and if it’s fated that Robin’s livery shall be ordered to-day, who’s to tell what else may happen? Any how, come what will of it, you see, my love, I shall wash my hands of the scandal? *You* won’t blame me, will you, darling?”

“Not if Mr. Niggles sends them home in time. But you know he may suppose Mr. Lambert has got lots of things; and Mary Finch says he hasn’t. It would be such a pity, wouldn’t it, Lady Ada, for him not to be there, after all the pains he has taken for us? But really I must now say good-bye, or Jane will think I am never coming.”

“Dear, strange girl! as singular almost, in some things, as her father,” mentally exclaimed Lady Ada, as Darby and Joan, with their carriage-load of flowers and evergreens, rattled over the heath homewards. “What an organ of conflicting emotions is that young, yearning heart of hers! Yearning for what? Not for what most young hearts pant for, for she has it all. All? No, no, not *all*. Or why must she be running away from

those happy thoughts of to-morrow, which Jane Rosse is so wild about, to come and talk to me about sick rooms, and *sœurs de charité*, and 'how much happier she would be if she were poor, instead of rich, and had to earn her bread?' And to-morrow will be her birth-day ; and all the town are mad with joy about it ! What possesses her ? Not her father's princely greed of gain ; for 'it pains her,' she says, 'when she is told how rich she will be, without so much as an effort on her own part towards it.' Strange girl ! strange daughter of a strange father ! But how beautiful ! how fascinatingly lovely she is ! spite of those self-searching moods of hers that spring from—what, I wonder ? Not anything of the kind that she inherits from her mother. Faith Lincoln declares it. Her mother would have been the happiest of the happy, but for her peculiar husband's irreligion. Ah, what a source of misery was that free-thinking, sceptical spirit of Angelo Lyons's to his gentle, pious, loving wife. And in how many other homes, besides theirs, is it the fountain source of more tears and wretchedness than the direst poverty ever caused ? Thank God ! I have not that to add to my griefs, when I think of my poor lost Cecil, and how many troubles might have been spared us if we had both of us led a more

Christian life. Ah me! No, not for ten times the wealth with which Angelo Lyons could endow me, if I would be his wife—should that be his wish—would I give my hand at the altar to a man who, while he pronounced the words put into his mouth by the minister, because he must do it, as little believed that he was responsible for them to his God, as that he was bound to love, and comfort, and honour, and keep me in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all others, keep only unto me, when it seemed good to him to do otherwise. Yes, and how likely it is that that sweet girl, Rachel, resembling her mother so much, should, from constant intercourse with a strange-minded man like her father, feel how utterly powerless his wealth is to give her peace. If so, there is a clue at once to it all. It must be so. For though the Gold cannot give it, God can. Yes, and she feels He *will*. Which, perhaps, is what is perpetually pressing on her so, when she says, with almost tears in her eyes, how “useless she feels herself, and how much happier she thinks she should be if she had to work for her bread—if she were a *sœur de charité*. *Sœur de charité*, indeed! What, with that leap of the heart, and those young eyes glowing as they did at the thought of being dressed like Jane, and of poor Alan Lambert, too,

without any clothes at all to go in. No love of this world in Rachel Lyons? Oh, yes! as much as there is ceaseless fear of what may come after it in her father, with all his free thinking;”—meditating on which, Lady Ada ordered her basket carriage to be brought round to take her to the Hall, and from thence to Mr. Nugent Niggles, for Robin’s livery.

END OF VOL. I.





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